

THE GROWTH
OF THE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH



ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL
CHRISTIANITY

ROBERT HASTINGS NICHOLS

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The growth of the Christian
church



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THE GROWTH OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

By ✓

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Seminary

Volume I

ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL
CHRISTIANITY

Philadelphia .
THE WESTMINSTER PRESS

1914

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PREFACE

THE writing of this book was undertaken at the request of the Committee on Religious Education of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. That Committee desired a presentation of Church History suitable for the use of classes of young people of high-school age. The book is intended for such classes, and makes no pretensions to do anything more than try to meet their needs.

ROBERT HASTINGS NICHOLS.

Auburn Theological Seminary,
May 13, 1914.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS AND CLASS LEADERS

The chapters in these volumes have been framed with the thought that each of them should be the material for one meeting of a class. Thus there would be two courses of nine meetings each, or one course of eighteen meetings. The individual teacher or leader must decide whether or not his class will need more than one meeting for any chapter. It will hardly be found advisable for a class of the age for which the book is primarily intended to take more than one chapter at a meeting. With more mature classes this might be done, though it is hoped that in every chapter there is enough for an hour's consideration by any class. Although Chapters XVII and XVIII are longer than the others, it will probably be found that students, coming to them after going through the earlier chapters, will be able to take each of them at one meeting.

Unless the teacher is already somewhat familiar with church history, it is strongly advised that he read all that the class is to cover in the course before he prepares himself for the first meeting. To do this will make it much easier to handle the chapters as they come.

It is even more strongly advised that the teacher read as much as he can in standard books on church history and in the biographies of the great

men of the Church who are referred to in the chapters. Other things being equal, the teacher who reads most will give most to his class. It is hardly possible to teach church history interestingly and effectively on the basis of only such knowledge as can be obtained from the textbook used. Lists of books for teachers' reading have been provided, and it is hoped that the books named, or others, will be much read.

Almost all of the classes which will use this book will be wholly voluntary. It is peculiarly difficult to get reading done by such classes. Yet it will not be of much interest or use to anyone to attend a meeting of a class studying church history, if he has not done the reading assigned for the meeting. The teacher should employ all possible means to get the class to do the reading beforehand. The Questions for Study appended to the chapters may be of use in this connection. The members of the class might be asked to write out the answers to some or all of the questions. It will conduce to faithfulness in reading, and will be otherwise helpful, if the teacher devotes a few minutes at each meeting to going rapidly over what is to be studied for the next meeting.

No one thing illuminates the study of history more than does the use of maps. The teacher ought in his preparation to consult often an historical atlas. If a set of historical maps is available for class use, it will be a great advantage. Failing this, the maps in the historical atlas ought to be shown to the class at certain points, which will

suggest themselves. If the use of an historical atlas cannot be had, it will be much better for both teacher and class to use a general atlas than not to use any maps at all.

Much of the subject matter of these volumes will take the class, and perhaps the teacher also, into entirely strange regions of thought and action. The teacher will need to cultivate in himself, and to urge the class to cultivate, the power of imagination, so that just as far as possible he and they can make themselves at home in strange surroundings, and see things as they looked to men of different worlds and different thoughts and beliefs. This is one of the places at which wide reading will help the teacher. For his work with the class, he ought to be on the lookout for things in contemporary and familiar life which will help the student to realize conditions in the past.

Church history ought to be studied with open mind. Prejudices should all be put down. The mind should be held ready to receive new ideas, and to judge all things on their merits, not on the basis of what one has been accustomed to think. It ought to be studied, above all, with faith in God, who is guiding his Church to see more truth, and to do the work of building his everlasting kingdom.

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CHAPTER I

THE PREPARATION FOR CHRISTIANITY

One of the things that make the study of church history inspiring is that by it we are made to realize that God is actually at work for the salvation of mankind in the world where we live. Nowhere do we see this working of God more clearly than in the strange and wonderful way in which the world was made ready for the coming of Jesus. He came at "the fulness of the time," when all things had been so molded by the hand of God as to cause his coming to have the greatest possible effect. We can best understand this preparation of the world for Christianity by looking first at the parts played in it, under God, by three great peoples, and then at the condition of the society in which Christianity first appeared and made its first conquests.

I. THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PEOPLES

A. THE ROMANS

When Christianity came, and during all its early life, the Romans were rulers of the world. This we may truly call them, in spite of the fact that there was much outside of their possessions, for it was in what they ruled that the civilization of the world was then making its great advances.

The Roman
world power

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The inhabitants of this Roman domain regarded it as the world, and ignored what lay beyond. Moreover, the Roman world included all the lands with which Christianity had to do during the first three centuries of the Christian era. By A. D. 50 the Roman Empire included Europe south of the Rhine and the Danube, most of England, Egypt and the whole northern coast of Africa, and most of Asia from the Mediterranean to Mesopotamia. All this the Romans did not merely hold by force. They governed it intelligently and effectively. Wherever Roman rule spread it brought a higher civilization than had before existed. The empire's power was greatest and its administration most efficient in the lands about the Mediterranean, where Christianity was first planted.

Made men
one

By this world rule the Romans were most useful instruments of God to prepare the way for Christianity. Their empire, including so much of mankind, was an object lesson giving men some idea of the oneness of humanity. For ages separate governments had made groups of men feel themselves separate and different from all other men. But now all men were one in the sense that all separate governments had been broken down and one power ruled everywhere. Christianity is a universal religion, knowing no distinctions of race, appealing to men simply as men, making all one in Christ. For such a religion there was a most valuable preparation in the fact that when it came men were already one under Rome.

Furthermore, the Roman rule brought world-wide peace, *pax Romana*. Wars between nations were for the most part impossible under the sway of the mighty empire. This peace among the peoples was very favorable to the spread from one land to another of the religion which claimed universal dominion.

Caused
world-wide
peace

Finally the Roman administration, strong and watchful and wise, made travel and communication between different parts of the world safe and easy. The sea was cleared of the pirates who by their terrors had hindered navigation. On land the splendid Roman roads ran to all parts of the empire, doing for distant regions what railways do in our times; and these roads were so policed that the highway robber's life was unprofitable. Thus travel, for business and other purposes, was encouraged and greatly increased. It is probable that during the early years of Christianity people moved about from city to city and from country to country more largely than they did at any later time until after the Middle Ages. Those who know how much modern facilities of travel have furthered missionary work will at once see what this state of affairs meant to Christianity when it was being first planted. Such a missionary career as that of Paul would have been impossible without the freedom of travel due to the Roman rule. Christianity was greatly helped in its early years by this opening of doors throughout the civilized world, making it easy for the Christian missionaries to move about, and encouraging that free in-

Opened the
world for travel
and
intercourse

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tercourse among countries by which new ideas are circulated.

B. THE GREEKS

The wide
influence of the
Greeks

When Christianity came, the people living in the regions about the Mediterranean had been much affected by the spirit of the Greek people. Colonies of Greeks, some of them hundreds of years old, were widely scattered along the coasts of this sea. With their trade the Greeks went everywhere. Thus their influence was extensive, and it was strongest in those cities and countries which were the most important centers of the life of mankind. So strong was it that we often call this ancient world "Greco-Roman," for as it was ruled politically by Rome, the thinking of its people was largely molded by the Greeks.

The Greek
philosophers
stimulated
thought among
their people

During several centuries preceding the Christian era the Greek people had the most vigorous intellectual life in the world. Thought about the great questions over which men have always pondered, about the origin and the meaning of the world, about God and man, and right and wrong, flourished among them as nowhere else. The Hebrews had indeed received a revelation of God and his will not possessed by the Greeks, but they were not given to discussing these great questions as were the Greeks. From the sixth to the third century before Christ a great movement of thought on matters of philosophy and theology took place among the Greeks, in the course of which some of the world's very greatest thinkers appeared,

and much that is permanently valuable was given to the world. The result of this was a wonderful development of the mind of the Greek people. To a large extent they learned how to think about the questions which their philosophers debated. Their wits were sharpened and their curiosity was roused. Socrates, going about in the public places of Athens and asking men questions which made them stop and consider things which had never before occurred to them, is a type of this influence. So it came about that the typical Greek was a keen, inquisitive, disputatious man, eager to talk of the deepest things in heaven and earth.

We can see now what would be the effect of the contact of the Greeks with other peoples. Their influence worked far and wide to rouse inquiry concerning the great questions of life, and to teach men how to think about them. This temper of intellectual curiosity and this readiness of thought were prevalent in the great centers of the Greco-Roman world, the places where Christianity was preached by its early missionaries. Thus the people of these places were more hospitable to a new religion and better prepared to receive it than they would have been if they had not come under the Greek influence.

Hence the
Greek influence
set other
peoples to
thinking

The Greeks made another important contribution to the preparation for Christianity by supplying the language in which it was first to speak to mankind. A sign of the extent and strength of the Greek influence is seen in the fact that the language most used in the countries around the

The Greeks
provided a
universal
language

Mediterranean was a Greek dialect, that known as the Koiné, the "common" dialect. This was the universal language of the Greco-Roman world, used for all purposes of popular intercourse. One who spoke it could make himself understood everywhere, especially in those great centers where Christianity was first planted. The earliest Christian missionaries, for example Paul, did most of their preaching in this language. In it the earliest Christian books, those that make up our New Testament, were written. Thus the universal religion found ready for it a universal language in which it could at once speak to all men; and this inestimable help had been provided, under God, by the Greek people.

C. THE JEWS

The mission of
the Jewish
people

The Hebrew, or Jewish, people had been divinely appointed to be the stewards for the world of true religion. It was their mission to receive from God special revelation concerning himself and his will, to master this divine teaching as it was progressively given to them, and to preserve it in purity, so that in "the fulness of the time" they might be a blessing to all peoples. We cannot fully see the grandeur of their national life unless we view their history as a part of God's preparation of the world for the coming of the religion by which he purposed to save the world.

In Jewish
religious life
the first
Christians
were trained

The Jews, it has been truly said, supplied "the cradle of Christianity," the surroundings for its birth and early growth. They provided the re-

religious life in which were trained our Lord Jesus himself, and all the earliest Christians, including all the first apostles and missionaries. Nowhere else in the world at the coming of Christianity was there a religious life so pure and strong as that which existed among the best representatives of Jewish religion. Its central features were two, the highest conception of God known to men, that which is taught in the Old Testament; and the highest known ideal of moral life, an ideal springing from this lofty conception of God. Speaking as men must, we cannot see how such a life and such teachings as those of Jesus could have come out of the religious life of any existing people other than the Jews. Nor can we see how men fit to receive at its beginning the religion which he brought and to spread it abroad could have been found among any other people. Men trained in that older religion which was so closely akin to Christianity were needed to understand and preach the new religion. The better one knows the life of the Greeks and the Romans, the more one feels the impossibility of gathering among them men who would have been to Christianity what the first disciples and Paul were.

Secondly, the Jews prepared the way for Christianity by being a race expecting what Christianity offered, a divine Saviour. The hope of a Messiah was cherished by all Jews as their dearest possession. To be sure it was held by many of them in gross and worldly forms. But in all its forms there was the essential thing, the ardent expecta-

The Jews were
expecting a
Saviour

tion of one sent of God to redeem his people. Among other peoples there was nowhere an outlook on the future comparable to the Jewish Messianic hope. Indeed in the Greco-Roman world there was a good deal of despair and weariness. Christianity found all of its first adherents among the Jews, and one thing that qualified them to receive it was the Jewish hope of a divine Saviour.

The Jews gave
to Christianity
the Old
Testament

Thirdly, the Jews provided for Christianity an inestimable help in their sacred books, our Old Testament, treasured by them as the record of God's revelation of himself in their national life. By this means the new religion was supplied at the outset with a religious literature far surpassing anything of the kind in existence, which confirmed Christian teachings and foreshadowed Christ. Before Christianity had had time to produce Christian books, it found ready to its hand writings which were of the greatest help to it. Jesus had constantly used the Old Testament to sustain his own life and to support his teachings. In keeping with his example the Jewish Scriptures were regularly read in the meetings of the early Christians for worship. All Christians, Jewish and of other peoples, drew from them incalculable inspiration and instruction. It should be noted, too, that the Old Testament was known to the numerous Gentiles who had been attracted to Jewish religion as the purest they could find, and that thus it proved a way by which many of these men came to Jesus.

The influence
of the Jews of
the Dispersion

Something must be said about the important part played in the preparation for Christianity by the Jews of the Dispersion. This means the many Jews who, because of the scattering resulting from the captivities, were to be found in almost every town of the Greco-Roman world. Everywhere they kept their religion and maintained their synagogues. In many places they carried on active missionary work. By this they won from among the Gentiles numerous proselytes, and made the teachings of their religion known to many others who did not fully accept it. This Jewish mission was a most useful forerunner of the Christian mission, for it spread extensively among the Gentiles certain elements of religion which are essential to Christianity as well as to Judaism. One of these was the belief that God is one. Another was a lofty moral law, which Judaism, like Christianity, taught was an integral part of religion. In this both of them differed from pagan religions, which had nothing to say about how men ought to live. A third was the expectation of a Saviour. Many Gentiles had been inspired with this hope by contact with Jews, and thus were prepared to accept Jesus as him who was to come.

II. THE WORLD AT THE COMING OF CHRISTIANITY

A. RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS

The old religion of the gods and goddesses of Greece and Rome, known to us through the stories of classical mythology, had lost almost all of its

The
old classical
religion
decaying

life by the time of the birth of Christianity. The forms of its worship were somewhat kept up, but its power was gone. Educated men generally did not pretend to believe in it, nor had it much influence over the common people. The emperor Augustus, who was reigning when Jesus was born, was greatly troubled by the decay of the old religion, and made great efforts to revive it, but mostly in vain. Augustus also introduced the Roman state religion. As it was later more fully developed, this was the worship of the statues of the reigning emperor and of past emperors, as symbols of the empire. But this worship was a political act, an expression of loyalty to the government, rather than what we should think an act of religion.

**The Roman
state religion**

New religions Nevertheless the age was not, as it is sometimes thought, irreligious. For out of the East strange new religions rose and swept in successive waves over the civilized world, each winning converts. From Asia Minor came the worship of "the great mother," Cybele. From Egypt came the cult of Serapis and Isis. From Persia came the most popular and powerful of all these Oriental religions, that of Mithra, which had some striking superficial likenesses to Christianity, especially in recognizing the need of cleansing from sin and in having a teaching of a future life. Mithraism won an especially large following in the Roman army, and thus was carried far and wide. Besides these, forms of religion modeled after the old Greek mysteries attracted many people. The mysteries were

elaborate ceremonies expressing in dramatic form the desire for purification from sin, the hope of immortality, and the joy of a fellowship resting on religion.

The age in which Christianity won its first conquests was therefore a religious age, in the sense that there was much interest in learning about various forms of religion and much eager seeking after better religions. It was not religious in the sense of there being general satisfaction with any one religion. The Greco-Roman world was full of restless, discontented spiritual yearning. In view of what Christianity brought, it should be noticed that three things were prominent in the prevailing religious temper; a growing belief in one universal God, a widespread sense of sin and desire for purification from it, and a great interest in the question of what comes after death.

A world of religious curiosity and desire

The best religion existing before Christianity came, we have said, was the Jewish. But in spite of its superiority and its wide teaching through the Dispersion, Judaism could not meet the world's need. While Jesus was living, it showed that it was not able to be a universal religion, that it had done its great work. This clearly appears in the character of its leaders. They were the priests, the Sadducees, and the teachers, the Pharisees. The Sadducees were worldly and skeptical, and therefore without power to strengthen religious life. Among the Pharisees there was growing steadily a narrow racial spirit, desirous of confining the Jewish religion to the Jewish people, and

Judaism could not be the world religion

opposed to the missionary work among the Gentiles which had been going on.

B. INTELLECTUAL CONDITIONS

The great Greek philosophical movement came to an end, so far as concerned progress in the quest for truth, long before the Christian era. When Christianity appeared, Greek thought was making no advance. Two Greek philosophies, Epicureanism and Stoicism, had considerable vogue in the Roman Empire during the early years of Christianity. But neither of them satisfied men's minds as to the great questions of sin and of the future life which were burdening them. Both of them had great faults as teachings to live by, Epicureanism being too superficial and selfish, and Stoicism too lacking in human sympathy. Among thoughtful men there was a strong sense of the unsatisfactoriness of human thinking, and much desire for more certainty than they had as to the great questions of life. At the death of his daughter, the younger Pliny writes thus to a friend: "Give me some fresh comfort, great and strong, such as I have never yet heard or read. Everything that I have read or heard comes back now to my memory, but my sorrow is too deep to be reached by it."

C. MORAL CONDITIONS

It has been customary to paint the moral state of the civilized world during the early days of Christianity in the blackest colors, as though no goodness worth mentioning existed. Such an idea

of the age is not justified by the facts known to us. It has been produced chiefly by too large use of the writings of the satirists of the time, who lashed the vices of "society," and of the scandals recounted by the biographers of the aristocracy. The upper classes were no doubt horribly corrupt. Among the middle and lower ranks, however, many men and women were leading virtuous and kindly lives.

But when we have collected all the favorable evidence, as well as the unfavorable, the resulting picture is dark enough. The age was decadent. Men's minds were uncertain, restless, dissatisfied. The existing religions and philosophies had no control over life. The result was a prevailing low moral tone. There were uncleanness, falsehood, cruelty, selfishness, beyond anything we know in Christendom. No force making for better things existed, until Christianity gained power. The tendency of society was steadily downward to even greater wickedness.

In keeping with all this, a temper of weariness and emptiness ruled many men, and especially some of the best and most thoughtful. It was a world of much gloom and hopelessness, as well as corruption, into which the first Christian missionaries brought their good news of salvation.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What was the extent of the Roman Empire when Christianity appeared? What was the character of its government?

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2. In what three ways did the Roman rule prepare the world for Christianity?

3. What was the extent of Greek influence when Christianity appeared? What effect did it have upon men?

4. How was this effect of Greek influence a preparation for Christianity?

5. What did the Greeks do for Christianity by their language?

6. What was the divine mission of the Jewish people?

7. In what three ways did the Jews prepare the way for Christianity?

8. What was the "Dispersion," and what special services did the Jews of the Dispersion give in the preparation for Christianity?

9. What was the state of the old religion of Greece and Rome when Christianity came?

10. What was the Roman state religion?

11. What new religions were influential in the Greco-Roman world in the early days of Christianity?

12. What was the general religious character of the age?

13. Why could not Judaism be the universal religion?

14. What was the intellectual condition of the Greco-Roman world when Christianity appeared?

15. What was its moral condition?

READING

Wenley: "The Preparation for Christianity."

T. C. Hall: "The Historical Setting of the Early Gospel," chs. I-IV.

Breed: "The Preparation of the World for Christ."

✓ Foakes-Jackson: "History of the Christian Church to A. D. 461," ch. I.

✓ Fisher: "History of the Christian Church," Period I, ch. I.

✓ Schaff: "History of the Christian Church," Vol. I, ch. I.

✓ Glover: "The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire," chs. I-III.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST CENTURY

I. JESUS AND HIS CHURCH

A. JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

Jesus had "compassion on the multitude," and strove to reach with his ministry as many men and women as was possible. But he evidently felt that he could do more for the world by constantly keeping with himself a few chosen men, and filling them with his spirit, so that they might continue his work, than by spending all his time in general public teaching. At the very beginning of his ministry he began to call men to be his personal companions. Later, from those who believed in him he chose twelve to be his close associates. We are told also of seventy disciples whom he appointed and instructed for a special ministry of preaching. Jesus' relations with his disciples, especially with the Twelve, form one of the most important and characteristic parts of his work. He gave to them teaching which he did not give generally. He trained them so that after he was gone they could give to men knowledge of him, and of the revelation of God and the salvation which he brought, and of the way of life to which he called everyone. Toward the end of his ministry he confined himself more and more to this kind of work for his disciples. After his resurrec-

tion his appearances were to them only. His last word to them was a command to carry their preaching of his gospel among "all the nations," and a promise to be with them in fullness of power through all time while they were doing this worldwide work.

B. JESUS FOUNDING THE CHURCH

Plainly Jesus designed that there should be a society of his followers to give to mankind his gospel and minister to mankind in his spirit, to labor as he did for the increase of the kingdom of God. He fashioned no organization or plan of government for this society. He appointed no officers to have authority in it over other members. He prescribed for it no creed. He imposed on it no code of rules. He commanded no forms or orders for worship, and gave to his followers only the simplest religious rites. These were baptism, the use of water to signify spiritual cleansing and consecration to his discipleship, and the Lord's Supper, the use of portions of the two most common articles of food as a commemoration of himself, especially of his death for the redemption of men. Therefore what Jesus did would not be truly described by saying that he organized the Church. He did a greater thing than give organization; he gave life. He founded the Church, or created it.

Jesus formed the society of his followers by calling them together about himself. He communicated to it so far as he could while he was on earth his own life, his spirit and purpose. He promised

to continue to the end of the world to impart his life to this society, his Church. His great gift to his Church, we may say, was himself. In him the Church was to find its principles, its aims, its power. He left it free to make for itself forms of organization and of worship, and statements of belief, and methods of work. His purpose evidently was that the life of his Church, that is, his life abiding in his followers, should express itself in any outward ways that might seem to them best for the great end in view.

II. THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

(TO A. D. 100)

A. THE BEGINNING

In one sense, the Christian Church came into being when Jesus first made disciples. But it is commonly said that the history of the Church begins on the day of Pentecost following the resurrection; for then began the active life of the Church. After our Lord's withdrawal of his bodily presence from his disciples, though they had laid upon them his command to preach his gospel to the world, they remained quiet. They were waiting, according to his word, for power from on high. Ten days later, at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus came upon them. It came as a great endowment of energy for service. At once they became outspoken witnesses for their Lord, full of gallant activity. The change showed itself in Peter's speech at Pentecost. What

The effect of
Pentecost on
the disciples

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we see in him that day expresses the spirit of all these first Christians from that day forward. That day, then, there came into being the Christian Church, as a company of disciples of Jesus bearing witness of him, proclaiming his gospel, building the kingdom of God on earth.

B. CHURCH EXTENSION

The first mission was to Jews only

The first preaching of the gospel, at Pentecost, was addressed to Jews only. For some time, perhaps two or three years, Christian missions were confined to the Jews, beginning in Jerusalem and thence extending into Palestine. The earliest Christians did not at once see the full breadth of Jesus' purpose of saving the world. Being themselves Jews, and knowing that he was the Messiah expected of their people, they at first considered him the Saviour solely or chiefly of Jews, in spite of much in his life and words which should have taught them better.

Through persecution the Church was led to widen its mission

Persecution was the way by which the infant Church came to a truer understanding of the gospel which Jesus had given it to preach, and a broader vision of the work which Jesus purposed for it. The Jewish religious authorities, who had from the first hindered Christian preaching, were aroused by the bold defiance of Stephen's speech to make a systematic, savage campaign against Christianity. By this attack the Christian community in Jerusalem, numbering now some thousands, was broken up. Its members sought safety here and there in Palestine. Though fleeing for

their lives because of their faith, they carried the gospel wherever they went. Some of them went to the great city of Antioch in Syria. Here the followers of Jesus were first called "Christians."¹ And here, living in the midst of a Greek population, these exiles made Jesus known to Greeks as well as to Jews.

Thus certain obscure and unknown believers took the first great step in causing Christianity to be a universal religion. A little later this church at Antioch sent out Barnabas and Paul, the first men to go under express appointment to preach Christ to the Gentiles. Paul it was who, under God, finished the work of tearing Christianity loose from Jewish fetters. He made it actually what it always had been in God's purpose, a religion for all men. Henceforth it was preached to all men on equal terms.

**Christianity
preached as a
universal
religion**

Thus launched on its great missionary career, Christianity spread so that by A. D. 100 there were churches in many cities of Asia Minor, in a number of places in Palestine, Syria, Macedonia and Greece, in Rome and Puteoli in Italy, in Alexandria and probably in Spain. The greatest worker in bringing this about was, of course, Paul. The names of some other missionaries, for example Prisca and Aquila, are recorded in the New Testament. The traditions about the preaching of the original apostles lead us to think that all of them

**Growth of
Christianity in
the first
century**

**Missionaries
who caused
this growth**

¹ This name seems to have been applied to the disciples by other people, not chosen by themselves. It may have been a derisive nickname.

were fearless witnesses, carrying the gospel far, though we know certainly about their work only in the cases of Peter and John. But much of the heroic service that spread Christianity so widely was given by nameless disciples. Many a Christian was a missionary, eager to give the joy which he had in Christ to the people he met in his daily work and in other associations. By their zeal in speaking of him, and yet more by lives faithful to him and showing his power to save, these unknown Christians were most effective missionaries of their religion.

C. THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Characteristics
of the
Christians;
(1) brotherly
love

A Christian church in these times was usually a small company of believers living in a large heathen town. Almost all of them were poor people, some of them slaves, although there were some Christians of higher social rank, especially in the Roman church. Everywhere certain things distinguished the Christians from their pagan neighbors. They called each other brethren in Christ, and really acted as brethren. The poor, the sick, the widows and orphans, were lovingly cared for. The collection and administration of charitable funds formed one of the most important parts of the life of these early churches. Within the Church social distinctions were abolished. Master and slave stood on one level. Women held a much more honorable and influential position than they did in the world outside. The Christians were marked also by a moral earnestness and a purity

(2) moral
earnestness
and purity

unknown elsewhere. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians tell us of a people far from perfect, as would be expected of those lately converted from heathenism and living in the midst of its temptations. Nevertheless, the lives of Christians generally showed the power of the gospel to give men and women a new righteousness. Again, the ruling temper of the Christians was gladness and confidence. They rejoiced in the love of God their Father, in the fellowship of the living Lord Jesus, in the forgiveness of sins, in the certainty of immortality; and so they stood out against the sadness that oppressed many around them. These characteristics of the primitive Christians were powerful to commend Christianity to others and thus further its spread. (3) confident gladness

All these characteristics drew some of their strength from the fact that these believers lived in constant expectation of the speedy return of their Lord in visible glorious presence, and his triumphant reign on the earth. The dominance of this hope in the apostolic Church should never be forgotten in thinking of this period. True, these earliest Christians were mistaken in some of their ideas on this subject, but their hope did much to purify and strengthen their lives. Hope of the Lord's coming

The Christians needed special help, for they were constantly exposed to suffering for their faith. Sometimes they were harassed by Jewish enemies of Christianity. Sometimes unorganized popular anger vented itself on them. The Christians were hated by many because their lives were Persecution

standing condemnations of prevalent religious customs and moral conduct. From the time of the emperor Nero (A. D. 54-68) the Roman Government was hostile to Christianity, and tried to suppress it, with vigor and cruelty which varied with different rulers. The reasons for this official persecution we shall consider in our next chapter; but it should be noted here that during most of the latter half of the first century Christianity had the power that ruled the world for an enemy. Many Christians, famous leaders like Paul and also unknown heroes, won the martyr's crown.

D. THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

The meeting
for social
worship

Persecution and poverty made church buildings impossible in the first century, so that the Christians met for worship in private houses. From Paul's Epistles, especially those to the Corinthians, we learn that there were two sorts of meetings for worship. One was of the nature of a prayer meeting. It was carried on by the people, who took part as the Spirit moved them. Prayers were offered, and testimony and instruction given. There was singing of the Psalms, and also of Christian hymns, which began to be written in the first century. The Old Testament Scriptures were read and expounded, and there was reading or recitation from memory of accounts of the deeds and words of Jesus. When apostles sent to churches letters, such as we have in the Epistles of the New Testament, these also were read. In this meeting the enthusiasm of primitive Christianity found

free utterance. Sometimes there was such eagerness to take part that disorder resulted. To this meeting non-Christians were admitted. Sometimes one of them would be moved to confess his sins and give his allegiance to Jesus.

The other meeting was the love feast. This was a joyful and sacred common meal, the symbol of Christian brotherly love. Only Christians were allowed to be present. Everyone brought provisions for the meal, and these were to be shared by all alike. Paul rebukes the selfishness of those who ate what they themselves brought, refusing to share with those who could not bring things as good. During the meal prayers of thanksgiving were offered by the presiding brother. At its close the Lord's Supper was celebrated, some of the food of the meal being used for the sacrament. This meeting was held on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, which the Christians kept as the weekly festival of their Lord's resurrection. Although there is a good deal of uncertainty about the matter, it is probable that at first the love feast was held in the evening, the ordinary evening meal taking this form among Christians. Later in the first century, it seems, the Lord's Supper was separated from the love feast and observed at a morning meeting. We know that in the second century the Lord's Supper, or Eucharist, was celebrated on the morning of the Lord's Day.

The love feast
and the Lord's
Supper

E. THE BELIEF OF THE CHURCH

No creeds or other formal statements of its belief

**Belief of the
first Christians**

were composed by the Church in the first century. The Apostles' Creed was not used before the second century. For knowledge of the belief of the early Christians we must go to the New Testament. They believed in God the Father, in Jesus as Son of God and Saviour, in the Holy Spirit of whose presence they were conscious. They believed in the forgiveness of sins. They accepted Jesus' teaching of love to all men as their moral ideal. They looked for his speedy return, for final judgment exercised by him, and for eternal life as the destiny of those who believed in him. Their doctrinal ideas, if such they may be called, were very simple. All their thoughts about religious truth were dominated by Jesus, in whom their religion was wholly wrapped up.

**Influences
causing errors;
(1) the
Judaizers**

Two influences caused some of the first century Christians to have mistaken religious ideas, and somewhat threatened the purity of the gospel. The "Judaizers" taught that Christians ought to perform all the ceremonies required by the Jewish law. Against them Paul contended sharply; for he saw that if their teachings prevailed, Christianity could not be the religion of people of all races. In the New Testament there are also warnings against the errors of what is called Gnosticism. This took its rise in the first century, and later became very powerful.¹ It was a strange mixture of Christian, Jewish and heathen ideas, enough like Christianity to confuse the minds of some Christians.

(2) Gnosticism

¹ See p. 49.

F. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

All these earliest churches were independent and self-governing. The Christians held that they all belonged to one universal Church, for all were one in Christ. But there was no general organization having control over the scattered churches. The original apostles were regarded with great deference because of their relation to Jesus, and exercised a certain authority, as is shown by their decision concerning Gentile Christians and the Jewish law, reported in Acts, ch. 15. Paul was revered for his great work, and therefore had a position of authority. But the authority of these men was not formal or official, such as comes from a definite organization. In this first century there was no organized government of the whole Church. Each congregation managed its own affairs in freedom.

The New Testament tells of two kinds of office-bearers belonging to the local churches. First, there were elders, or presbyters,¹ to whom was given also the title "bishop," meaning one who has oversight. Secondly, there were deacons. The elders or bishops of a church had the oversight of it, in pastoral care, discipline and financial affairs. The deacons gave subordinate service of the same kinds. The highest work that fell to the elders was that of presiding at the Lord's Supper, which was the central and most sacred feature of the life of the Church. These office-bearers were

¹ Presbyter is the Greek word for elder.

chosen by the people. Their authority came to them from God, through the Christian people, in whom the Spirit of God lived. It is to be noted that in the first century there was no one officer doing for a church what a modern pastor does.

The prophetic
ministry

Beside the ministry exercised by these local office-bearers, there was another sort of ministry, borne by the men called in the New Testament apostles and prophets and teachers. The name "apostle" was not confined to the original companions of Jesus, but was given to others who did the apostolic work of preaching the gospel in new fields. These apostles and prophets and teachers were men who had gifts of the Spirit to preach and teach. This, not any appointment or election, was their title to the ministry. Their ministry was to the whole Church, not to one local community of Christians, and they, especially the apostles and prophets, traveled about to do their work. In the first century the preaching and teaching of the word in the churches was done largely by these men who had gifts for such service, rather than by the local office-bearers.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Describe Jesus' relations with his disciples.
2. What was Jesus' purpose regarding the Church?
3. In what sense did Jesus found the Church? What did he not give to it, and what did he give?
4. When did the active life of the Church begin?
5. To whom was the gospel first preached?
6. How did the Church come to widen its preaching?

7. What did Paul have to do with Christianity's becoming the universal religion?
8. How far did Christianity spread in the first century?
9. Who were its missionaries?
10. What sort of people composed the earliest churches? What were the distinguishing marks of their life?
11. Whence did persecution come on the Christians of this period?
12. What two kinds of meetings for worship did they have?
13. What was their belief?
14. What influences caused mistaken religious ideas among them?
15. Was there any general church government in the first century?
16. What were the officers of the local churches?
17. What was the prophetic ministry?

READING

Ropes: "The Apostolic Age," chs. II-VIII.

Bartlet: "The Apostolic Age."

✓ McGiffert: "The Apostolic Age," especially chs. I, II, IV, VI.

✓ Foakes-Jackson: "History of the Christian Church to A. D. 461," chs. II, III, VI, X.

Lindsay: "The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries," Lectures II-IV.

T. C. Hall: "The Historical Setting of the Early Gospel," chs. V-VII.

Gwatkin: "Early Church History," Vol. I, chs. IV-VI.

Glover: "The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire," chs. IV, V.

Workman: "Persecution in the Early Church," ch. I.

CHAPTER III

THE ANCIENT CHURCH

(A. D. 100-590)

I. THE WORLD IN WHICH THE CHURCH LIVED

Extent of the
Roman
Empire

During the period covered by this chapter and the next, the Roman Empire reached its greatest extent, and then declined until, so far as Western Europe was concerned, it passed away. At its height it included considerable territory north of the Rhine and the Danube,¹ and stretched eastward to the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea.

Causes of its
decline;
(1) internal

The decline of the empire was brought about by many causes, internal and external. It fell partly by its own weight, having too great a territory and too varied a population to be held permanently under one central authority. Many of the emperors were weak, or bad, or both. Government in the provinces became so corrupt and oppressive that some of them were brought to financial ruin and great misery. Slavery worked out, both in Italy and elsewhere, the disastrous results which it has always produced, weakening character in all ranks of society and wasting resources. The strength of the Romans and of some of the provincial peoples was eaten out by moral decay, infecting not only the aristocracy, but all classes of

¹ See p. 2.

the population. This showed itself especially in dishonesty in private business and government, in sensuality and disregard of marriage, and in degrading popular amusements.

While the empire was thus breaking down inwardly, it received from without tremendous blows at the hands of the "barbarians." These were chiefly the German tribes, whose homes, when we first hear of them, were about the lower courses of the great rivers falling into the Baltic and North seas. Thence they made, tribe by tribe, their great migrations. In these they were not making mere raids, but seeking new homes. Their movements, which lasted altogether not less than five centuries, changed the face of Europe, bringing to many regions entirely new populations. The Visigoths ended their long wanderings by conquering Spain, the Burgundians took possession of southeastern France, the Franks of northern France and western Germany, the Angles and Saxons of England.

As early as the second century the Germans pressed on the frontier of the empire hard enough to strain the Roman power to the utmost. From this time the emperors had to stand them off by receiving some tribes as allies, giving them lands and taking their fighting men into the Roman army. In A. D. 378 there was fought at Adrianople one of the decisive battles of the world, in which the Visigoths, a German tribe then dwelling near the lower Danube, defeated the Romans under Valens and killed this emperor. By this victory the frontier was broken beyond repair, so that

(2) external;
the attacks of
the Germans

Visigoths and other barbarians poured in. After this, events moved rapidly to the sack of Rome by the Visigoths under Alaric in 410. Even after this the Roman imperial line continued, but the emperors were wretchedly incompetent. After the middle of this century, the real rulers were the German soldiers of the Roman army, who set up and pulled down as they would the occupants of the throne. Finally, in 476, they dethroned Romulus Augustulus, the last Roman emperor of the West.

Division of the
rule of the
empire into
East and West

While the empire was still strong the emperor Diocletian (284-305) had seen that its territory was too great to be ruled from one center. Accordingly he had arranged a division of authority among four rulers, with two capitals, Rome and Nicomedia, in Asia Minor. A few years later the strong hands of Constantine the Great seized all the power. Already ruling in the West, he became sole emperor in 323. He removed the capital to his splendid new city Constantinople, but still called himself Roman emperor. After several rulers had succeeded him in this power, division of authority again prevailed until Theodosius, already ruling in the East, obtained sole rule and held it for three years (392-395). He was the last to reign over the whole Roman world. After him there were two lines of emperors, those of East and West, with capitals at Constantinople and Rome.

Break-up of
the empire in
the West

The power of the Western emperors dwindled, as we have seen, and when the last of them was dethroned it was only the passing of a shadow.

Before the end most of the Western provinces had been broken away from the empire by the barbarians. For a long time their tribes incessantly fought one another. No strong government arose anywhere to rule as Rome once had, and in the fifth and sixth centuries western Europe was in anarchy and dreadfully afflicted by constant warfare.

In the East the emperors were far more worthy of the name than in the later Western Empire. Many of them were strong men, effectively ruling their great territory in eastern Europe and western Asia. One of them during this period was Justinian (527-565), among the very greatest of Roman rulers.

**Eastern
emperors**

It is important to note that, though for many years there were two emperors, the empire was not thought of as divided. Its government was divided, but men still regarded the Roman Empire as one, and both emperors as Roman emperors. After the end came in the West, the monarchs of Constantinople claimed to be sole rulers of the Roman world.

II. THE CHURCH

A. CHURCH EXTENSION

We have now to see what progress Christianity made in these troubled times. Two divisions should be made of this subject, for about midway in our period, under Constantine, came a great change in the position of Christianity in the world, that is the end of Roman persecution.

1. Before Constantine

Growth of
Christianity in
the second and
third centuries

In the two centuries between A. D. 100 and Constantine's reign the religion of Jesus made wonderful strides. At the end of these centuries it was the prevailing religion in Asia Minor, then a very important part of the world, and in Armenia. In Macedonia and Greece, Italy from Rome southwards, southern France, Spain, northern Africa, Egypt and Syria, it was very strong. In the farthest regions of the empire it had its outposts.

Its spread in
social classes

Christianity had spread into all classes of society, as well as over a wide territory. No longer were its people found chiefly among the poorest and most unlearned. The churches contained not a few men and women of high rank and wealth. Christians were numerous in the imperial court, the government and the army. Many men of high culture had become followers of Jesus, and used their powers to further the growth of his religion. Christianity had its strongest hold, however, among the freedmen. These men, emancipated slaves, formed a distinct social class. Among them were almost all of the skilled workmen of the time, and many merchants. The freedmen were industrious, intelligent and thrifty, and were gaining position and power. The spread of Christianity was partly due to the fact that it was so strong in this rising class.

How this
growth was
gained;
(1) mission-
aries

At once we ask, What men brought about this great advance of Christianity? At the beginning of the period there were, as in the apostolic age,

traveling missionaries, pioneers of Christianity; but by A. D. 200 few of them remained.

The apologists, or literary defenders of Christianity, gave valuable missionary service. One of these was Justin Martyr (about 100-165). He was a Greek, born in Palestine, and showed his Greek blood by spending his youth in going from one school of philosophy to another, in search of truth. Somewhere he met a venerable man, a Christian, who led him to see that the truth which he had found came to its climax in Christ. The rest of his life, until his martyrdom, Justin spent in traveling about as philosophical teachers did, teaching Christianity as the perfect philosophy. He also wrote many books intended to explain Christian truth to the inquiring heathen. Another apologist was Tertullian (about 160-230), a Carthaginian lawyer, converted to Christianity in middle life. He had remarkable gifts of keen thought and forcible language, terse, lively, and satirical. These, with his fiery zeal for Christ and his stern moral sense, made him one of the greatest men of the early Church. In many writings he refuted false charges against the Christians and Christianity, and powerfully set forth the truth.

The men who did the work of teachers¹ in the churches were also very useful in spreading knowledge of Christianity. Here belongs Origen of Alexandria (185-253). He was born of Christian parents, and received the best education then to be had. In learning and power of thought he had

¹ See p. 26.

no superior in his day. He and Tertullian were the two greatest men in the Church of the second and third centuries. When only eighteen years old Origen became head of the catechetical school of the church of Alexandria. There he was a teacher of remarkable influence, doing much to make Christianity known to non-Christians as well as to Christians. He wrote an amazing number of books expounding Christian truth, including a number of commentaries on books of the Bible, which are still valued by Biblical students. In the persecution under the emperor Decius he suffered cruelties which hastened his death.

(4)
the Christians
generally

But most of the work that so greatly forwarded the cause of the cross was done by the Christian people generally. By their lives, especially by their brotherly love to each other and also to non-Christians, and their fidelity and courage under persecution, and by constantly telling the gospel story, these nameless servants of Christ won most of those who were won to him in these times.

Persecution

We do not rightly appreciate the conquests made by the Church in these centuries unless we remember that all this was achieved in a time of persecution. The Roman Government was tolerant of all religions so long as those who held them honored the state religion by paying worship to the statues of the emperors.¹ This true Christians could not and would not do. Their refusal made them seem unpatriotic, treasonable, and thus their religion became offensive to the government. From the time

Its cause

¹ The law released Jews from this worship.

of Nero, to be a Christian was to be outside the law, for it was to share in something which was held to mean disloyalty. Here we see another reason why the people often hated the Christians. They were regarded by the people somewhat as are men who will not honor the American flag. Sometimes government officers saved the Christians from mob fury.

Three things were special reasons of the Roman Government's hostility toward Christianity. One was its rapid growth, in spite of repression. Then the most important meetings of the Christians, those for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, were held behind closed doors. Therefore to some emperors the Church looked like a widespread and growing secret society of disloyal principles. Furthermore, Christianity, as we have said, was particularly strong in one social class, that of the freedmen. This class was gaining power, and hence was feared and hated by the aristocracy. But the aristocracy controlled the government. Thus the strength of Christianity among the freedmen made the government more opposed to it.

Special reasons
of persecution

For all these reasons, Christians were objects of pretty constant suspicion and frequent attacks. Their condition was not unlike that of revolutionists in Russia. At any time they might be arrested by the police and accused before magistrates, the charge usually being treason. They were then required to worship the imperial statues. Refusal meant cruel torture and often, for the obstinate, death.

The govern-
ment's action

Periods of
persecution

Persecution varied greatly in different times and places, according to the disposition of reigning emperors or of local officials. Early in the third century, after the sufferings under Septimius Severus, there were more than thirty years of peace. Then came the most terrible persecution yet experienced, under Decius and his two successors. They used all their power in a systematic and ruthless attempt to stamp out Christianity all over the empire. Thousands of Christians were martyred, and thousands also fell away from the faith. But from this fire the Church came out purified and stronger than ever, and it made great advances in the long peace from 268 to 303. Then came, under Diocletian, the last persecution. This was savage but in most places short-lived, and did not seriously weaken the Church. In 311 an edict of toleration for Christianity, containing something like a confession that the persecution had been a mistake and a failure, was issued by Galerius, ruling in the East. In 313 another edict, by Constantine and Licinius, emperors in East and West, allowed entire religious liberty.

End of
persecution

2. After Constantine¹

Constantine
and
Christianity

Before Constantine the Church was in conflict with the world; after him it was on the throne of the world. What his motives for his action toward

¹ Constantine was not strictly the first to give toleration to Christianity, for Galerius did this two years before him. But his name is usually associated with the great change in Christianity's position, for reasons which will be clear as we go on.

Christianity were is somewhat a mystery. No doubt he saw that it could not be conquered, but was surely going to be a greater power in the empire, and therefore wished to have the Christians on his side. At the time when, as he said, he saw the blazing cross in the sky with the words "Hoc vince,"¹ he was at war with rivals for the throne, and needed all the support he could get. No doubt, also, he had some real personal belief in Christianity, or at least sympathy with it.

His motives

At all events, it was Constantine, emperor in the West after 312 and sole emperor after 323, who did far more than anyone else to cause the vast and sudden change that came. First he gave general religious liberty, chiefly for the benefit of Christians. Then he showed great favor to Christianity, making grants from his treasury for the building of churches and the support of the clergy, relieving them of taxation, and replacing the eagles on his standards with the labarum,² the sign of Christ. Finally he entered actively into the affairs of the Church, endeavoring to settle doctrinal disputes, and in general exercising authority among the Christians. All this time he was not openly a Christian, for he would not receive baptism till just before his death. But his interest and favor gave to Christianity great prestige.

His actions

The new position of Christianity at once brought rapid growth, some of which was for its good and some not. Freed from persecution, and also dis-

Effect on the Church of Constantine's favor

¹ By this conquer.

² ✠

ciplined and purified by its trials, the Church could and did push forward its work with great power, in both old and new fields. On the other hand, because the religion patronized by the emperor became fashionable, thousands crowded into the churches who were not Christians at heart, and therefore did harm to the cause of Christ.

Missions;

(1) Martin of Tours

Sweeping rapidly forward into new fields, Christian missions made great gains. In central France in the fourth century, Martin, bishop of Tours, a man of great activity and powerful natural eloquence, of constant charity and courageous zeal, carried on a wide and fruitful work through his own tireless labors and through disciples trained in monasteries which he established. At the same time Ulfilas had a long and heroic career as the apostle to the Goths about the lower Danube. He translated a large part of the Bible into their tongue, having previously devised an alphabet for it, and thus made it for the first time a written language. This was the first translation of the Bible into any of the Germanic family of languages, to which English belongs. It was also the beginning of Germanic literature. Because of Ulfilas' work, the Goths, when they captured Rome in 410, were Christians.

(2) Ulfilas

(3) Patrick

In the next century Christianity was carried to the westernmost limit of the known world, by Patrick. In the mist of legends which surrounds him, we can clearly see a man who had the true spirit of Christ and who laid enduring foundations of Christianity among a wild people. Patrick was

born somewhere in Britain, of Christian parents. There was Christianity in Britain as early as the third century, probably planted by Christians in the Roman army. In his boyhood he was captured by Irish pirates, and held a while in slavery among them. Alone and in bondage, he became much more deeply Christian than he had been before. He escaped to France, lived for a time in a monastery, and then returned to Britain. But he was constantly haunted by the thought of the need of the Irish for Christ: "I fancied I heard the voice of the folk who were near the wood of Fochlad, nigh to the western sea." At length, after some years of study in France, he went to Ireland in 433. There for thirty years he was a missionary of singular fidelity, courage and success.

From Ireland in the sixth century the famous Columba led a company of monks to a little island off the west coast of Scotland, Iona. From the monastery established there Columba and his followers went out to their missions. Their work spread widely in Scotland and in England, and struck deep into the continent, in France, southern Germany and Switzerland. No part of early Christian history shines more brightly than the story of these Scottish monks. Nothing could daunt or discourage their zeal to preach Christ. Their Christian teaching had an apostolic simplicity not found elsewhere, and their lives a rare purity and Christlikeness.

(4) Columba
and the
Scottish monks

Along with all this true missionary work, we

Conversion of
Clovis and his
Franks

find in the fifth century one of the most striking cases of the superficial Christianizing of a people. Clovis, king of the Franks, had a Christian wife who had long tried to make him a Christian. Hard pressed in battle, he vowed to become a Christian if Christ would help him to win. He won, declared himself a Christian, and compelled his people to accept Christianity. On Christmas Day, 496, he and three thousand of his warriors, says the chronicler Gregory of Tours, were baptized. So the strongest of the Germanic tribes became nominally Christian. But the history of Clovis and of the Franks for years afterwards shows that this Christianity was hardly skin-deep.

Growth of the
Church through
imperial favor

Another kind of church extension which was a doubtful benefit was that which was accomplished through the power of the empire. The emperors after Constantine followed and bettered his example in regard to Christianity. They showed it favor, and also asserted their authority in church affairs, especially in the disputes about Christian belief which were so frequent in the fourth century. Thus Christianity was practically the established religion of the empire, though it was not such officially. This, of course, meant a constant rapid increase of professing Christians, many people taking up with the religion just because it was approved by the emperors, without any real interest in it.

Imperial favor toward Christianity suffered a short check under Julian (361-363), who made an earnest but vain attempt to revive paganism. The

story is told that as he was dying, he realized that his opposition to Christianity had come to nothing, and said, "Thou hast conquered, Galilæan." A few years later (380), Theodosius, emperor in the East, a Christian, decreed that all subjects of the empire must accept the Christian faith as stated in the creed of Nicea, adopted by the Church in 325.¹ Theodosius continued this policy when he became ruler of the whole Roman world, in 392. Thus Christianity became part of the law of the empire. All its inhabitants had to profess themselves Christians, under penalty of outlawry for not so doing. This, of course, gave the death blow to paganism in the empire. Many temples and idols were destroyed, and by A. D. 400, pagan worship was gone. It looks like a great triumph for Christianity that the religion which had been under persecution less than a century before should now be the only lawful religion in the empire. Really, it was not such a great triumph, for the new state of things meant that in the Church there were many people who were not Christians at heart. This action of Theodosius was the beginning of the use of governmental power to compel people to profess Christianity, a thing which has done the religion of Jesus much harm.

Christianity
made
compulsory

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What were the internal causes of the decline of the Roman Empire?
2. What was the effect of the German migrations in western Europe?

¹ See p. 50.

42 GROWTH OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

3. What were the relations of the Germans to the Roman Empire?

4. How did the Eastern and Western Empires arise?

5. How far did Christianity spread in the second and third centuries? How much did it spread in various social classes?

6. How was this growth of Christianity brought about?

7. Who were Tertullian and Origen, and what did they do for Christianity?

8. Why did the Roman Government persecute Christians?

9. Describe the persecution. How was it ended?

10. What was Constantine's personal attitude toward Christianity? What were his reasons for giving it liberty?

11. What did Constantine do toward Christianity and the Church? What was the effect of his action upon the Church?

12. What advances did the Church make in A. D. 313-590?

13. Describe the work of Ulfilas, Patrick, and Columba and his followers.

14. How were the Franks converted?

15. How did the emperors after Constantine treat Christianity?

16. What action did Theodosius take toward Christianity?

READING

G. B. Adams: "European History," pp. 101-151, on the Roman Empire.

Foakes-Jackson: "History of the Christian Church to A. D. 461," chs. IV, V, XI, XII, XV, XVII, XX.

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CHAPTER IV

THE ANCIENT CHURCH (CONTINUED)

(A. D. 100-590)

B. LIFE IN THE CHURCH

Effect of
persecution on
the character
of the
Christians

While the persecution lasted, it largely shaped the Church's moral character. Only earnest and faithful people would profess Christianity when to do so brought on one the hostility of the government. In this way the life of the Christians was kept on a high moral level. In the times of peace, however, many entered the Church, and among these some of light character, whose presence lowered the average of Christian conduct. Then when persecution began again, its terrors caused these weaker ones to desert the cause of Christ. Thus the Church was purged of its unreliable members, and made more worthy of its Lord and stronger for his work.

Character of the
Christians in
second and
third centuries

In the second and third centuries the general character of the Christians continued to be, as it was in the first, high enough to distinguish them from the world about them. Though there were serious blemishes, on the whole the Christians were acknowledged to be of superior morality. Brotherliness, purity, honesty, were characteristic of them. Their brotherliness especially impressed a world in which this was new. Cases of need were frequent among them. Many poor people were in their

number. Persecution made many widows and orphans, and to many men brought confiscation of goods. To meet these needs Christian love flowed forth freely. Nor was it confined to helping those who held the faith. Often in times of general distress, for example, in pestilence, the Christians cared for the needy without distinction, when no one else would do so.

Constantine's action put the Church in an entirely different situation. Its new position of freedom and imperial favor, of the friendship of the world, was not altogether good for its life. So many people of all sorts crowded into the churches that it was found impossible to keep up the careful examination and training of candidates for membership which had previously been the rule. Many found places in the churches who were really pagans, and whose lives were a reproach. This was true both in the older seats of Christianity and on its mission fields. Thus there came a decline of the general level of character in the Church.

The favor of the empire caused some moral decline

To meet this situation, the Church made large use of its discipline, that is its method of inquiring into and punishing offenses against morality. Instead of instructing people in Christian living before they came into membership, the Church schooled them after they were in. Punishments were imposed to repress immorality and train church members. For minor offenses these punishments were penances, such as public confessions, fastings and prayers, and for graver offenses excommunication.

Discipline used to remedy this

Monasticism

In this time, when there was much worldliness and evil in the Church, many Christians became eager for a higher goodness than they saw around them. Thus arose a form of life which was destined to be one of the greatest forces in the history of Christianity, that is, monasticism. What made men become monks was a desire for salvation. For two reasons the life of monks appeared a surer way of salvation than the life of other men.

Its motive;
desire for
salvation:

(1) by separation from the world

It was a life separated from the world, and therefore free from the hindrances to Christian living found in the world. In the early Christian centuries, Christians were living in a heathen society, which constantly put great temptations in their way. Even after society became nominally Christian, it long remained practically heathen, as we shall see. Besides, Europe was for centuries in a state of constant warfare, most unfavorable to Christian living. Thus those who earnestly desired to lead Christian lives came to think that they could do this far better by separating themselves from the general life of men.

(2) by entire self-denial; asceticism and poverty

Secondly, the monastic life gave opportunity for the pursuit of holiness by entire self-denial. In the ideas then held about self-denial a large place was taken by what is called asceticism. This is a way of action which appears in many religions. Its fundamental principle is that evil resides in matter. Matter, of course, includes the human body. Therefore, it was thought, holiness is attained by freeing the spirit as far as possible from the body; and this freedom can be gained by deny-

ing satisfaction to the desires of the body. Another form of self-denial which was highly esteemed was complete poverty, the lack of all possessions. So men came to think that the most truly religious life was led by those who gave up all their goods, had poor lodgings, dressed uncomfortably, ate scanty food, slept little, scourged themselves savagely for penance, and were unmarried. Only thus, it was believed, could men and women reach the highest kind of goodness.

In the second century there were in the East, especially in Egypt, many hermit monks, living in desert places, in extreme self-denial, and regarded by Christians in general as specially holy men. From the East the monastic ideal spread to the West in the fourth century. There it soon was very popular, and many men and women became monks and nuns. In the West, however, monastic life took a different form from that usual in the East. The typical monk of the East was a solitary, living in extravagant hardships. Jerome tells of his sojourn in the desert of Chalcis, of his skin becoming "black as an Ethiopian's," his bones scarcely clinging together, his sleepless nights, his companionship with beasts and scorpions. But the typical monk of the West was a member of a community. Men and women went apart from a society unfavorable to Christian living, but they did not live alone. They entered societies ruled by Christianity, where it would be easier to lead Christian lives. In the western part of the Church monasticism was social, a life of brother-

Eastern and
Western
monasticism

hoods and sisterhoods, in which all goods were held in common and almost all things were done in common.

The
Benedictine
rule caused a
reform in
monastic life

Early in the sixth century the famous Benedictine monastic rule was drawn up by Benedict of Nursia in Italy. It soon became practically the universal law of Western monasteries. Benedict saw that the life of monks needed direction and purifying, and sought to bring this about by his rule. This made the monk's vow a vow for life, so that he was dead to the world. It required him, on taking his vow, to surrender all his property. It prescribed the virtues which a monk must vow to have, abstinence, obedience to superiors, silence, humility. It laid down his duties in great detail, dividing his time between worship, manual labor in house and field, and study. The reform caused by the rule gave to monastic life fresh popularity, resulting in the foundation of many new monasteries, which filled as fast as they were built.

Services of the
monks to the
world

The rule made the monasteries homes of industry and culture as well as of devotion and self-denial. Planted among barbarians, as many of them were, they were agencies of civilization. They gave object lessons in agriculture and handicrafts and building. They preserved and multiplied books¹ and encouraged study and writing. In their schools they provided most of the education that was to be had at the time. They were also the

¹ In this time copies of books could be made only by writing them out. By doing much of this the monks were great protectors of literature.

chief charitable institutions of the time, caring for the sick and the poor. Above all, they were powerful instruments of missionary work. From many of them streams of missionaries poured out, and for hundreds of years missions were carried on chiefly through monasteries. They did in their day very much what foreign mission stations do in ours.

C. THE BELIEF OF THE CHURCH

In this period the Church did much thinking about the chief matters of its belief, and expressed its conclusions in the great creeds. This work began in the second century. Then Gnosticism¹ became widespread and powerful, particularly in the East. Its Christian elements gave it something of a Christian appearance, yet it was really far from Christianity. Thus it was especially dangerous. In order to defend Christianity against Gnostic errors, and also to give instruction to catechumens,² short statements of what Christians believed were framed. Creeds much like the Apostles' Creed appeared in several places during the second century. Evidently something substantially the same as this was generally accepted as the Church's creed in this time, though no such statement had yet been adopted by any body representing the whole Church.

Gnosticism led
to creed
making

The Apostles'
Creed

¹ See p. 24.

² Catechumens were people seeking admission to the Church, who were kept a while under instruction.

Thought and
disputes about
the nature
of Christ

In the contest with Gnosticism the Church was roused to deeper thought about its belief, especially about the nature of Christ. Many Christians tried to find an explanation of his being. Discussion about him grew more and more active, particularly in the East, where the Greek influence made men keenly interested in such questions. Early in the fourth century thought on this subject issued in the great Arian controversy. *A*rius, a presbyter of Alexandria, taught that Christ was neither God nor man, but a created being intermediate between divinity and humanity, a kind of demigod. Arianism spread rapidly in the East, and the dispute over it rent the Church in twain, and even caused serious disturbances of public order.

Nicene council
and creed

To bring about peace, Constantine called the first general council¹ of the church at Nicea in Asia Minor, in 325. Here Athanasius, a deacon of Alexandria, was the great opponent of Arius and his party, and carried the council with him. By its decision the Church affirmed the divinity of Christ, declaring that he was "of the same substance" with the Father. While there was keen theological dispute in the council, what really caused the decision was not argument. It was Athanasius' appeal to a religious conviction in the hearts of its members, the conviction which can be expressed thus: "Jesus whom I know as my Redeemer cannot be less than God." The

very imp.
Doctrine of Trinity

¹ A general council consisted of all the bishops of the Church. Such a council is called also "ecumenical." At Nicea over three hundred bishops were present. On the office of bishop in this period, see Section E in this chapter.

council's decision forms the greater part of the Nicene Creed, the teaching of which has been accepted ever since throughout the Christian Church.

The question of the divinity of Christ having been settled, discussion moved to the subject of the relation of the divine and human natures in him. Differences of opinion were bitter, and some divisions in the church resulted.¹ The fourth general council, at Chalcedon in 451, made the final utterance of the Church on this subject, declaring that in Christ the two natures, divine and human, existed in full integrity.

Creed of
Chalcedon

Great truths that are vital to Christian faith, those of the incarnation and the trinity, were seen and expressed by the Church in this "age of the councils." These expressions have ever since received the assent of Christendom. With this gain there came a loss. All this discussion of statements of doctrine inclined men to think that the most important thing in Christianity was to hold correct definitions of Christian truth. The test of a man's Christianity was not so much his loyalty to Christ in spirit and conduct as his agreement with what the Church had declared to be right doctrine, that is, his orthodoxy. One who was not orthodox was cast out as a heretic, however faithful to Christ his life.²

Emphasis on
orthodoxy

Two great men who deeply affected the thought

¹ See p. 62.

² For example take the case of Nestorius, a man of blameless character, condemned in 431 solely for theological opinions.

and all the life of the Church may be noticed here. These are Jerome and Augustine.

Jerome

Jerome was born about 340, in Pannonia, the country about modern Vienna. His father was well to do, and gave his son an excellent education. He became a Christian when about twenty-five years old, while he was a student at Rome. For several years he lived in Aquileia with a company of friends, devoted to the study of the Scriptures and to practices of self-denial. Leaving them because of the remarkable faculty for quarreling which he displayed all his life, he passed several years as a monk in the desert near Antioch. Here he endured great hardships,¹ but still continued his studies. These he also kept up during a residence at Rome which followed. By reason of his earnest Christianity and his intellectual power, and also of his wit, of which his letters are full, he exerted great influence in the Roman aristocracy, particularly on some noblewomen. In 385 the enthusiasm for monastic life which he had long felt drove him to take up his abode in a monk's cell in Bethlehem.

Jerome's
translation of
the Bible

Here he lived until his death in 420, constantly studying and writing. Chief among his works was his translation of the Bible. The Old Testament was rendered for the first time into Latin, out of the Hebrew, and the existing Latin translation of the New Testament was carefully revised. Thus Jerome gave to the world one of the most largely used of all versions of the Scriptures. Later

¹ See p. 47.

called the Vulgate, it was the Bible of the Middle Ages. It is still regarded by the Roman Catholic Church as the authoritative text of the Bible. In addition to this work he wrote commentaries on books of the Bible, theological treatises, books in praise of monasticism, and countless letters.

Augustine's early life is described in the wonderful book called his Confessions. He was born in 354 in northern Africa, near Carthage. His mother was an earnest Christian, but he did not follow her example in his youth. At thirty he was a brilliant teacher of rhetoric and oratory in Carthage, possessed of remarkable power of thought and enjoying a high reputation. Though he had thought much about religious matters, he was practically without religion, and he was living immorally, indulging his strong passions.

Augustine's
early life

At this time he went to Rome to teach, and thence to Milan. Here the preaching of Ambrose, the great bishop of the city, affected him deeply. He began to study Christianity, and thus became almost persuaded. But he was not yet ready to give up the satisfaction of his base desires. One day a Christian friend told him about Antony, the famous Egyptian monk, and how two of his friends had been converted by reading of Antony's career. Strangely moved, Augustine rushed into the garden of his house, and there he heard a child in a neighboring house calling out, "Tolle, lege; tolle, lege" (take, read). He took up a volume of Paul's Epistles, and as he opened it his

His conversion

eyes fell upon Rom. 13 : 13, 14. This caused him to decide for Christ, and in the year 387 he was received into the Church. Shortly afterwards his mother died, having seen the fruit of a life of prayer for her son. His conversion gave to Christianity its greatest man between Paul and Luther, one whose influence is still working in both the Protestant and the Roman Catholic parts of Christendom.

His work and
influence

Eight years after his conversion Augustine became bishop of Hippo, one of the most important towns of Africa. Here he spent thirty-five years in great devotion to the people under his charge and in the writing of many books on various aspects of Christian truth. He had great difficulties with the Donatists, a very large body of Christians who were separated from the Catholic Church¹ and had a church of their own. The separation had occurred many years before, because the Donatists thought that the Church was too lenient toward those who had betrayed the faith in time of persecution, insomuch that it had ceased to be the true Church. By argument and by the influence which his character gave him, Augustine won back some of them. Unfortunately the unreasonableness and violence of some others led him to sanction the use of the emperor's power to compel them to return to the Church. His relations with the Donatists caused him to think much about the nature of the Christian Church, and so he came to work out his famous doctrine of the

¹ See p. 58.

Church.¹ This doctrine lay at the foundation of the great structure of the Roman Church of the Middle Ages. Upon it the Roman Catholic Church still builds.

Augustine's influence soon spread far beyond his African bishopric, all over the western part of the Church. It was shown in his great doctrinal controversy with Pelagius, in which, after long and widespread discussion, his views prevailed. Here Augustine maintained man's absolute need of divine grace for righteous character. This emphasis on the grace of God caused Luther and Calvin to esteem him very highly. Protestant theology has followed their example in being influenced by and honoring Augustine.

D. THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

At the end of this period, Christian worship was very different from what it was at the beginning. During this time it steadily grew more elaborate and more formal. Liturgies, with fixed orders of service and forms of prayer, were composed and largely used. The musical element of worship was much developed. Choirs were introduced, and antiphonal singing. From the second century the writing and use of hymns greatly increased.

Worship more
elaborate and
formal

This tendency in worship naturally grew stronger after Christianity received its freedom. Then church buildings became much more numerous, larger, and more decorative. In the service

¹ See p. 60.

there was increased use of whatever gave dignity and impressiveness. Augustine tells how profoundly he was affected by the service in Ambrose's magnificent church in Milan, by the solemn music, the stately ceremonial, the crowds of reverent worshipers, and the preaching of the great bishop.

**Paganism in
Christian
worship**

Another tendency marks the worship of the Church in this time, that is, the entrance of pagan elements. This came about because the Church lived in the midst of paganism, until about A. D. 400,¹ and because after Constantine many entered

Saint worship

it who were really pagans under the surface. Saint worship is the chief example of this tendency. It was natural that veneration should be paid to martyrs and notable monastics and other men and women famed for holiness. Among people who had been accustomed to the worship of gods of towns or sacred places, and who were not thoroughly Christianized, this veneration quickly passed over into a worship. The saints came to be regarded as something like lesser deities, whose intercession availed with God. Places connected with their lives were considered especially sacred. Pilgrimages to such places naturally followed. To venerate relics, or material objects connected with the saints, parts of their bodies or property, and to believe that in them was a power to work miracles, came easily to those in whom pagan superstition still remained. The causes of saint worship were particularly present in the case

Mariolatry

¹ See p. 41.

of the Virgin Mary, whose worship began late in this period.

Both these tendencies affected greatly the central act of worship, the Lord's Supper, or Eucharist, as it was called from the second century. This became a stately and gorgeous ceremony, with fixed rituals and much care for details. And under the influence of pagan worship, of which sacrifice was the chief element, the sacrament came to be regarded as a sacrifice, offered by the priest for the benefit of the people, efficacious for their salvation.¹

Change in the
Lord's Supper

Although this way of celebrating the Lord's Supper tended to make preaching of less importance, the age had great preachers. Among them were Ambrose of Milan, a man brave enough to forbid the emperor Theodosius to enter his church until he had repented of his brutal massacre of the Thessalonians, and John of Constantinople, whose eloquence caused him to be known by the nickname Chrysostom, "golden-mouthed."

Preaching

E. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

1. *The Development of the Organization*

In the first century, as we saw, the churches were independent communities governed by groups of elders or bishops and of deacons. But very soon a change began by which each church came to have one office-bearer over it. This was per-

¹ From the fifth century the sacrament was often called the Mass in the West. This name is associated with the idea of sacrifice.

**The parochial
bishop**

fectly natural, for one man can manage affairs and give leadership better than several. Thus gradually one of the men called elders or bishops rose above the rest, and was called the bishop of the church, the others being called only elders or presbyters. This bishop was like a modern pastor. So arose the threefold ministry, of bishop, presbyters and deacons.

**Rise of the
Catholic Church**

There came also a change in the relations of the churches. In the second century a sort of loose federation of churches grew up, having as common bonds one form of belief, expressed in confessions much like the Apostles' Creed, and one form of local church government, that just mentioned. These churches called themselves the Catholic Church, catholic meaning universal. There were some churches which differed from the great number in belief or government. These were regarded as heretical, outside the Catholic Church. Thus the Church, instead of being a simple brotherhood in Christ, as in the apostolic age, became a federation defined by a rule of faith and of government. After the creeds were adopted by the councils, the lines against heretics were drawn even more tightly, for now there were precise statements of faith which could be made tests of membership in the Catholic Church.

**Clergy and
laity**

Changes took place also in the position of the ministry. The distinction between clergy and laymen, unknown in the apostolic age, was gradually marked. The bishops, presbyters and deacons were separated in rank from the members of the

churches. As the sacrificial idea of the Lord's Supper grew up, the clergy were more and more frequently called priests. The office of the bishop was magnified. He was thought to have authority directly from God enabling him to teach Christian truth rightly. Sometimes he was regarded as empowered to give God's forgiveness. The growth of the idea that asceticism was the road to holiness caused the belief that the clergy ought to be unmarried. This was made law in the Church in the West in the fourth century.

Priests

Celibacy

We have seen in the local churches a process of centralization, by which one office-bearer instead of several came to be over a church. Other steps in centralization followed. As the number of Christians grew, the bishop of a town would have several churches in the town and the surrounding region under him, instead of one. Each of these would be cared for by a presbyter, the bishop having oversight of the whole district or "diocese." Then the bishops of larger towns naturally rose to greater importance than those of smaller places. They were called metropolitans, and each of them had oversight of several bishops and their dioceses. By a further step in centralization, five bishops rose still higher, to the rank of patriarchs. These were the bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem and Antioch.

The diocesan bishop

Metropolitans

Patriarchs

Complete development of the

Catholic Church

Thus out of the independent churches of the apostolic age grew the Catholic Church, having its complete graded organization, its clergy possessing spiritual authority over the people, and its definite

Augustine's
doctrine
of the
Church

creed, and calling those who would not accept its rule heretics. Then in the fifth century Augustine taught his doctrine of the nature of the Catholic Church, which was soon generally accepted. He believed that the first bishops of the Church were appointed by the apostles. The apostles received from Jesus the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the care of the Church, and bequeathed them to their successors, the first bishops. The bishops who held their offices in regular succession from the first bishops possessed these gifts of the Spirit. Hence they, and only they, preserved the pure, original faith and could give the true Christian teaching which brought salvation. And they alone were keepers of the true sacraments through which the saving grace of God came to men. What made the true Church, Augustine taught, was the possession of bishops standing in this apostolic succession. Only in the Catholic Church, the Church of these bishops in the apostolic succession, was there salvation.¹

Rise of the
power of
the Roman
bishop

Still another step was taken in the centralization of the government of the Church. Among the five patriarchs, the two most prominent were those of Rome and Constantinople, the two principal cities of the world. Several causes worked to raise the Roman bishop to the highest place. By far the greatest was the fact that he was bishop of the ancient capital of the world. For centuries authority over the world had gone forth from

¹ Augustine was not the first to teach these ideas; but he worked out the subject more fully than anyone before.

Rome. Inevitably its bishop had a power in the Church that no other bishop could have. Another cause was the custom which grew up of making the Roman bishop a court of appeal in church disputes. This custom was made more influential by the fact that the emperors encouraged it. Then from the fifth century the so-called Petrine claim was generally accepted. This is the claim that Christ made Peter first among the apostles, and that Peter was the first bishop of Rome and bequeathed his primacy to his successors there, so that they had a divine right to first place among the bishops. The general acceptance of this made conditions just the same as though it were true. Besides all this, the Roman bishops pursued a consistent policy of holding all authority that they had gained, claiming still more, and taking advantage of every opportunity to use their power. A striking example of this was the great Leo I (440-461), sometimes called the "first pope."¹ He asserted his universal authority in the strongest terms and claimed the right to give commands to bishops everywhere. Though his claims were utterly denied by the bishop of Constantinople, and met some resistance in the West, his aggressiveness greatly increased the power of his office.

¹ The word "pope" is derived from the late Latin word *papa*, meaning "father." This was frequently used in the western part of the Church in the fourth and fifth centuries, as the title of any bishop. However, it gradually came to be reserved for the bishop of Rome.

*2. Churches Separated from the Catholic Church***Nestorian
Church**

Certain churches separate from the Catholic Church were formed in this period, as results of theological disputes, combined with political and racial causes. In the fifth century Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, was condemned by the Church¹ and banished by the emperor for heretical opinions about the person of Christ. His ideas were shared by many Christians in the Syrian city Edessa. The "Nestorians" were undoubted believers in Christ. They differed from the Catholic Church only by explaining Christ's divinity in a way which was not considered orthodox. Being banished from Edessa for their heresy by the emperor, they went to Persia. There they greatly strengthened the existing Christianity. Very soon an independent church was organized, headed by an archbishop, who in 498 took the title Patriarch of the East. The Nestorians were full of missionary zeal. Wherever they went, at their work, on trading journeys, in search of homes, they carried the gospel. Thus their church grew rapidly in Asia.

In the disputes about the nature of Christ there arose another party holding unorthodox opinions on this subject. This was called the Monophysite party, because its members taught that in Christ there was one nature, instead of two, divine and human, as the creed of Chalcedon said. Out of this party, which was very strong, arose two sep-

¹ At the third general council, at Ephesus in 431.

arate churches. The Jacobite Church was formed in the sixth century, in Asia Minor, Syria and Mesopotamia. In the two last-named regions it still supports a feeble life. The Coptic Church, comprising almost all the native Christians of Egypt, was cut off as heretical by the Catholic Church in the sixth century, and has remained separate.

Jacobite
Church

Coptic Church

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What was the effect of the persecution on the character of the Christians?
2. What was the general character of the Christians in the second and third centuries?
3. How was the moral life of the Church affected by the action of Constantine and his successors?
4. Why did men become monks?
5. What were the provisions of the Benedictine rule?
6. What services to the world did the monks render?
7. When did the Apostles' Creed come into use, and why?
8. What was the teaching of Arius about Christ?
9. What was the decision of the Council of Nicea on this subject? Who was the dominant man in the council?
10. What doctrinal decision was made at the Council of Chalcedon?
11. Describe the life and work of Jerome.
12. How did Augustine become a Christian? Describe his work and influence.
13. What changes took place in the worship of the Church in this period? What was the cause of saint worship?
14. Describe the growth of the office of bishop.
15. Describe the formation of the Catholic Church. Why were some Christians called heretics?
16. Describe the complete organization of the Catholic Church?

64 GROWTH OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

17. What was Augustine's theory of the Church?
18. Why did the power of the bishop of Rome increase?
19. What was the origin of the Nestorian Church?

READING

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CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

(A. D. 590-1073)

I. THE WORLD IN WHICH THE CHURCH LIVED

Warfare, confusion and barbarian darkness prevailed in western Europe during most of the period on which we now enter. The Lombards, one of the least civilized of the German tribes, seized a kingdom in northern and central Italy. Scandinavian pirates, the Normans and the Danes, harried the coast of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. The Normans took lands in France and southern Italy, and in 1066 conquered England. The Franks greatly increased their domains in northern France and western Germany.

**Wars and
conquests in
western
Europe**

Out of the East came a great, new, conquering people, the Arabs, inspired by their new religion, Mohammedanism, to invincible fighting. In the beginning Mohammed was no doubt a sincere religious leader. The religion which he taught, having for its central feature the worship of one God, was much higher than the polytheism which had existed in Arabia before it. But he became a self-seeker, and adopted war as the means of spreading his religion. Before he died (632) he had conquered Arabia, and his religion had spread with his conquests. The Arabs, made warlike and un-

**Conquests of
the Moslems**

conquerable by his teachings, won a vast empire in western Asia. By desperate fighting the Eastern emperors held them at bay before Constantinople. But the Arabs swept resistlessly over Egypt, northern Africa and Spain. Their onrush in the West was not stopped until they met one of the strong Germanic peoples. In 732 near Tours, in central France, the Franks, under Charles Martel, defeated the warriors of Islam, who then retired into Spain. By noticing on a map how short is the distance between Tours and Asia opposite Constantinople, as compared with the distance already traveled by the Arabs, one may get an idea of how near they came to conquering the world, and how great was the danger to Christianity. Though at last stopped, they long held Spain and the rest of their conquests, and so had the Mediterranean at their mercy.

Anarchy in
western
Europe

Meanwhile there was no power in western Europe to uphold order and peace and civilization. Since the Western empire had passed away in the fifth century, no government had arisen to take its place. The kingdoms set up by the German tribes in the lands they had seized had not grown up to be anything like permanent civilized states. Their rulers were mostly lawless and violent, unable to maintain just and orderly government.

Charlemagne's
empire

But after years of anarchy there came at last one of the world's chief builders of civilization. This was Karl, king of the Franks, better known as Charlemagne, whose splendid reign lasted from

768 to 814. By wars of conquest he made himself ruler of a domain stretching from the Elbe River in Germany to the Ebro in northern Spain, having for its western limit the Atlantic waters, extending eastward beyond Vienna, and including much of northern Italy. Over this great territory Charlemagne's rule was wise, vigorous and effective. He caused the first light to shine in the intellectual darkness which had overspread Europe with the barbarian migrations, by encouraging learned men with his patronage and by promoting the establishment of schools in connection with cathedrals and monasteries. He was a Christian, and used his power in the interest of Christianity. However, some of his efforts in this direction, especially his forcing the Saxons by ruthless wars to profess themselves Christians, did more harm than good.

Being the ruler of western Europe, and so strongly Christian, Charlemagne could not but come into relations with the head of western Christianity, the Pope. The way to such relations had been paved for him by his father Pepin, who at the Pope's appeal had driven off enemies threatening Rome. Like his father, Charlemagne gave help to the Popes. In reward Pope Leo III on Christmas Day, 800, at Rome, crowned him emperor. This was regarded as a revival of the ancient Roman Empire, and Charlemagne as a successor of the Roman emperors. For Roman rule had made so deep an impression on the mind of Europe that men could think of no other empire than the

**Charlemagne
crowned by
the Pope**

Roman. In token of his connection with Rome, Charlemagne took the city as one of his capitals. But he and most of his subjects were Germans, so that, while called Roman, his was really a German Empire.

Holy Roman
Empire

Charlemagne's domain was divided by his grandsons into three kingdoms. Thus the empire passed away for a time. In the tenth century, however, a great German king, Otto I, built up by conquest a realm including the present German Empire, Switzerland, and northern and middle Italy. As the climax of his triumphs, he was crowned emperor by the Pope at Rome in 962. Thus Charlemagne's power was in great part revived. The empire created by Otto was called the Holy Roman Empire.¹ It was the chief political power of the Middle Ages, and indeed it lasted until 1806, though it was not strong during much of its life after the thirteenth century. Like Charlemagne's empire, it was called Roman because it was regarded as continuing the ancient Roman power, but was really German. It was called "Holy" because the men of the time considered the empire to have a religious character. Their thought was that the kingdom of God has two representatives in this world, the empire to rule in temporal matters, and the church, headed by the Pope, to rule in spiritual matters. According to the theory, both empire and church included all men—though as a matter

¹ The term "Holy" was not officially used until the twelfth century, though, in the time of Otto, men thought about the empire in the way which this word signifies.

of fact the empire never comprised all of western Europe. Thus human society, it was thought, had these two divinely appointed methods of government. It is plain now that this idea of a division of authority between two equal rulers could not be realized, and that either church or empire must be supreme. In the next period we shall see how this worked out.

During all this time of change in the West, the Eastern Empire held its throne at Constantinople. Its emperors claimed to be successors to the Roman rulers, denying that the German monarchs had any right to this majesty. Their empire was greatly reduced by the Arabian conquests, most of its Asiatic and all of its African territory being lost; but for centuries they kept the tide of Mohammedan power from overwhelming Europe. To this Eastern Empire Christianity is in debt for many years of defense of its territory in eastern Europe against Islam.

Eastern
Empire

II. THE CHURCH

A. CHURCH EXTENSION

In this period we shall see in the life of the Church much to sadden us; but that the spirit of Christ was there is shown by the splendid work of its missionaries.

When England was conquered by the heathen Angles and Saxons,¹ they drove into the westernmost parts of the island many of the original in-

¹ See p. 29.

**Missions in
England:**
(1) Roman

habitants, the Britons, and with them British Christianity. This had been planted in the third century, and had grown strong. But the conquerors were themselves conquered by Christianity, which came to them from two sources. From Rome, Pope Gregory I sent about forty monks, headed by Augustine, prior of a Roman monastery, as missionaries to England. In 597 they landed at the mouth of the Thames. In that year Ethelbert, king of Kent, was baptized, and soon his kingdom became largely a Christian land. Augustine was appointed first archbishop for England, having his seat at Canterbury. Other Roman missionaries followed his band. Another important Christian center was established at York, in the north of England.

(2) Scottish

But the larger part in Christianizing the English was played by Scottish monks, who came from Iona and Ireland early in the seventh century.¹ In 635 they established a monastery, really a mission station, at Lindisfarne, an island on the Yorkshire coast. Hence the monks went out widely over England. "They were loved and revered by the people. When one of them was traveling about he was everywhere received with gladness, those who met him on the road would eagerly ask his blessing, and at every place which he visited, people came in crowds . . . to hear him, for they knew that he came for no other reason than out of care for their souls, that he might preach, bap-

¹ See p. 39. These monks are properly called Scottish, since at this early time the people of Ireland were called Scots.

tize and visit the sick.”¹ It was these Scottish monks who really won the English people for Christ.

Thus there were in England two forms of Christianity, the Roman and the Scottish. They differed in some small matters of religious custom. Their chief difference was, however, that the Roman missionaries and their converts acknowledged the Pope’s rule, while the Scottish monks, whose Christianity did not owe its origin to Rome, would not do this. After some controversy it was decided at a synod in 664, chiefly through the influence of King Oswiu, that the English church should obey Roman authority. The church was completely organized by Theodore of Tarsus, archbishop of Canterbury, late in the same century. By that time Christianity was the religion of most of England.

**Roman
Christianity
prevails**

The English gave to other peoples some noble missionaries. Greatest of these, and of all missionaries in this age, was Boniface (680-755). He was born in Devonshire, of wealthy parents, and became a monk, famous for learning, eloquence and goodness. When no longer young he felt the call to carry the gospel to the Germans. Despite the entreaties of friends who foresaw for him a great career at home, he went thither, having obtained from the Pope appointment as missionary in Thuringia. He labored tremendously, preaching, baptizing, founding schools and monasteries,

**Boniface in
Germany**

¹ Stephens and Hunt: “History of the English Church,” Vol. I, p. 113.

building up a church organization in the great region of southern Germany which he won for Christianity. Like most medieval missionaries, he made violent attacks on heathen worship, seeking thus to prove that the heathen gods were nothing. He cut down the oak sacred to Odin at Geismar in the presence of a terror-stricken crowd of barbarians, who had allowed him to attempt this in expectation of seeing him struck dead for sacrilege. He showed one of the marks of a great missionary in winning many to join in his work, mostly English, both men and women. In addition to his great charge as archbishop of Mainz, head of the German church, Pope Zacharias gave him the task of reforming and reorganizing the corrupt church of France, where he wrought a regeneration. Boniface crowned his work by laying down his high offices in his seventy-fourth year, and going as a humble preacher to the Frisians, a wild people living about the mouths of the Rhine. Two years later a band of them murdered him. He had made southern Germany permanently a Christian land, and hardly any man has won richer conquests for Christ.

Ansgar in
Denmark
and Sweden

While the Northmen were ravaging the coasts of Europe, the Church was answering by sending the gospel to the homes of these terrors of the world. "The apostle of the north" was Ansgar (801-865), a Frenchman of noble family, a monk of Corbey. He had long desired to preach Christ to heathen men. When the opportunity came through the request of the Danish king, constrained

by Charlemagne, for a missionary, he hastened to Denmark. After five years there he crossed to Sweden with a few companions, and in that country made a good beginning. While he was away on a visit to Rome his missionaries were driven out and his work ruined. But with intrepid faith he rallied his forces and began again. For twenty-five more years he labored, and at last he saw Christianity triumphant in Sweden.

During this period Moravia and Bohemia were won for Christ by two remarkable men, Greeks of Thessalonica, Cyril and Methodius. The people of these countries were the first of the Slavic peoples to become Christian. In several countries of Europe Christianity was forced on the people by their rulers, sometimes with cruelty and bloodshed. This took place in Norway and in Poland, though in the former there was also work by English missionaries.

To a large extent Christianity was forced on the Russians. King Vladimir, late in the tenth century, adopted Christianity, for reasons of which different accounts are given. Then he compelled his people to do the same. Christianity was not new to all of them, for during most of the century missionaries from the Eastern Empire had been working in some parts of the country. But Vladimir required all his subjects to profess Christianity whether they knew anything about it or not. He and his successors, to be sure, encouraged missionary work, which was actively carried on, and

Coming of
Christianity
to Russia

promoted the organization of the Church throughout their realm. But many of the people, especially in the country districts, remained practically heathen. "Virtually the same heathenism has clung to the peasants in combination with their ignorant notions of Christianity right down to the present day."¹ The Russian church was from the first in close relations with the patriarch of Constantinople, and acknowledged his authority.

**Method of
medieval
missions**

One difference between these medieval missions and those we know should be noticed, for it meant much to the life of the Church for centuries. In modern Protestant missions the method almost invariably is to work for individual conversions, and to admit people to the Church only when they give evidence of being soundly converted. But the method of medieval missions generally was to receive people into the Church as rapidly as they would accept baptism, without inquiring particularly into the spiritual condition of each one. For example, Boniface is said to have baptized a hundred thousand converts in one year. Thus great masses of people were brought into the Church and under its teaching and discipline. The idea was that actual Christianization should be accomplished by a slow process of education and care within the Church. This method made possible a rapid extension of the Church, but it also brought into the Church thousands who had little idea of what it is to be a Christian.

¹ Adeney: "The Greek and Eastern Churches," p. 369.

B. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

Two matters are of prime importance under this head in this period; the further rise of the Roman church and bishop, and the separation of the Catholic Church into the eastern and western branches.

1. *The Rise of the Papacy*

At the beginning of the period stands one of the greatest men of the line of the Popes, Gregory I, called the Great. The fact that his election to the papacy gives the date (590) of the beginning of one of the three chief periods into which church history is usually divided witnesses to his importance. Gregory was of unblemished character, honored for his goodness and the severe self-denial of his life. He had great energy and courage, extraordinary administrative ability, statesmanlike wisdom, warm sympathy for human need, and a noble vision and ambition for Christianity. He was a voluminous writer on matters of Christian truth, and his books, though not original or scholarly, had much influence in his time. He took great interest in the ritual and music of the Church.

Gregory I
his character

By the use of his remarkable gifts, Gregory made the most of the Roman bishop's place as patriarch of the West. He constantly asserted and enforced his authority over this great and growing part of the Church. He made the great metropolitan bishops acknowledge the superiority of Rome. He caused worship to be according to the Roman

His work for
the papacy

ritual. He sent out missionaries, such as Augustine to England, who always spread obedience to Rome as well as Christianity. It would be unjust to say that his chief object was to increase the power of his office. He labored incessantly to purify and strengthen the Church, to care for its poor, to give Christianity to the heathen. But he sincerely believed that "the apostolic see is the head of all the churches," and therefore in everything he so acted as to raise higher the Roman bishop. Though he refused to be called "universal bishop," he won acknowledgment of his authority beyond the western patriarchate, and went far toward universal dominion. Thus Gregory did more than any other one man, except Hildebrand, to make the papacy what it became in the Middle Ages.

Factors in the
rise of the
papacy

(1) The Pope
the only strong
ruler in
western
Europe

Let us now look at several things which in this period combined to add to the power of the bishop of Rome. In western Europe no strong civil government existed between A. D. 400 and the time of Charlemagne (768-814), or again after Charlemagne, until Otto I came. In all this time there was no ruler who could give peace and justice and order. But at Rome, the ancient seat of world power, was the bishop, holding a time-honored holy office believed to have been first held by an apostle, claiming wide dominion in the Church, reaching out all over the West with his sovereignty. And many of the Roman bishops were strong men, able to rule. In all western Europe for many years the Pope was the only representative of perma-

ment government. In this situation the power of the papacy inevitably grew throughout the West, and to a lesser degree in other parts of the Church.

Furthermore, some of the Popes were representatives before men not merely of authority, but also of righteousness; and this in a time when many rulers knew no law but their own desires. During the papacy of Nicholas I (858-867), Lothaire, king of Lorraine, put away his wife and took another woman, and got approval of his course from the subservient archbishops of his realm. Such a situation was, of course, a grave menace to general morals. But the Pope, after a long struggle, compelled the king to take back his wife and dismiss her rival. No other power in the world could have brought this about. But the authority of the head of the church, resting on the fear of excommunication, which was believed to mean eternal death, sufficed to win the victory. Thus the Pope stood before the world for something greater than a king's power, that is, the moral law. Such affairs, of course, made the papacy stronger; but they show that in those times its strength could be a force for good.

Still another thing that strengthened the papacy was the position of the Popes as civil rulers in Rome. This is called the "temporal power." During most of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries there was no civil government worth mentioning in Rome. Often conditions of public distress from pestilence or famine, or of danger from enemies, or of anarchic disorder, made it the bishop's duty

(2) The Popes
stood for
righteousness

(3) Rise of the
temporal
power of the
papacy

to assume the government and rule the city. Such was the case with Gregory I. The people of Rome compelled him to accept election to the bishopric because the ruinous state of the city demanded a strong, wise, righteous ruler, and they knew that such he would be. Thus the bishop grew to be the regular civil as well as spiritual ruler of the city. During this period Rome came to be practically independent, with the Popes as its sovereigns. Besides the city, the Popes governed extensive lands in Italy given to them by Pepin, king of the Franks, Charlemagne's father.¹ They thus held a considerable territory, having revenues and an army like other civil rulers. This temporal sovereignty gave the Popes a security of power which could not have been gained otherwise.

(4) False
Decretals

Another factor of strength was the famous forgery called the False Decretals. This, the most influential fraud known to history, was a collection of decisions of church councils and decrees and letters of Popes. Some were genuine; but many of the writings attributed to Popes were forged.² They purported to be the work of bishops of Rome from the earliest Christian times down to the eighth century. They represented all these bishops, even the earliest, as exercising authority over the whole Church, and as being acknowledged to have such

¹ These lands did not belong to Pepin, for he had no authority in Italy; nevertheless he gave them away. The Popes kept them, and they formed a large part of the Papal States, over which the Popes were sovereigns until 1870.

² The false character of these documents is now universally acknowledged by Roman Catholic scholars, along with others.

authority. These false documents were probably composed in France about the middle of the ninth century. They seem to have been written largely with the purpose of defending the bishops against the interference of metropolitans or archbishops¹ and of civil rulers. This they did by representing the Popes as asserting the rights of the bishops. In doing this they also magnified the power of the papacy. Thus support out of history for the papal claims was manufactured.

Nicholas I² was the first Pope to use the Decretals to strengthen the papal office. He employed them to overcome archbishops who claimed to be independent of Roman rule. The false documents are so clearly false that nowadays it would be impossible to accomplish anything by means of them. But in the rude times when they appeared there were no scholars to see and expose the fraud. Following Nicholas' use of them, they were taken into the law of the Roman Church, and became a power to increase the papal authority.

Missions also played a part in building up the Roman power. When the Popes appointed missionaries they always charged them to bring the lands which they won into obedience to Rome. Thus every gain for Christianity meant gain for the papal power. We have already seen how the church in England came under the authority of the Popes, because of the presence of Roman mis-

(5) Missions

¹ Metropolitans were often called archbishops, from about this time.

² See p. 77.

sionaries.¹ Boniface did much to extend the papal sway, in the part of Germany which he won from heathenism, and also in Bavaria and France.

(6) Advance
of Islam

Strange to say, the advance of Islam was another force which raised Rome's power in the Church. When western Asia and northern Africa came under the Arab rule, the Church was terribly weakened in the East. Three of the five patriarchates, Alexandria, Jerusalem and Antioch, fell into the possession of a religion fiercely intolerant of Christianity. Meanwhile in the West the Church was growing fast through its missions. Thus that part of the Church which acknowledged the Pope's sovereignty gained in importance, while the Eastern portion, in which it was denied, became smaller and weaker.

2. The Separation of East and West

Causes of the
separation

The events which occasioned the final division of the Catholic Church into the Eastern and Western churches were so trifling as not to be worth mentioning. For the real causes of the division we must look deeper. One was a difference of race. In the West the dominant race was the Latin, which had been strengthened by mixture with the Germans. In the East it was the Greek, which had received much infusion of Oriental blood. Here was a difference which easily became the parent of misunderstanding and lack of sympathy, strengthening all other forces of separation. Another cause of the division of the Church was the

¹ See p. 71. .

division of the rule of the empire between East and West. The gulf between the two parts of the empire was widened when the line of Western emperors ended and only the Eastern emperors remained, having no real power in the West. The Eastern emperors ruled the church, along with all else in their domain. But the church in the West, headed by the Roman bishop, would not endure their control, and finally broke with the Eastern emperors when the Pope crowned Charlemagne Roman emperor. A third cause of division was the ever-growing claims of the Roman bishop, which were never acknowledged by the rival patriarch of Constantinople.

The first breach came in 867, when, because of The separation a quarrel between the Pope and the patriarch of Constantinople, an Eastern council declared the Pope deposed from his bishopric. This was undone by another council two years later. But the feud of East and West went on, with much bitter discussion of small differences of doctrine and usage, until 1054. Then, after another quarrel between Pope and patriarch, the Pope pronounced anathema on the patriarch and his supporters. This was the final rupture. From this time the Greek and Roman churches stood apart, each claiming to be the true Catholic Church and refusing any recognition to the other. The Greek, or Eastern, Church comprised Greece, most of the Balkan peninsula, and Russia, with most of the Christians in Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine. The rest of Europe obeyed the Pope.

Hereafter our attention will be given chiefly to the Roman or Western Church, because that played a much more influential part in the history of the world than did the Greek or Eastern, and because with it the religious life of America to-day has much more connection than it has with the latter church. But we should not let ourselves think that this was the whole Christian Church. Besides it there were, as well as the Eastern Church, the Nestorian and other separate churches in Asia and Egypt.¹

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What was the general condition of western Europe in the first part of this period?
2. How far did the Arab conquests extend?
3. Describe the empire and government of Charlemagne. What were his relations with the Pope?
4. When was Charlemagne's empire revived? What was the medieval idea of the relation between the empire and the church?
5. Describe the Christianization of the English.
6. Describe Boniface's work. What part of Europe did he add to the church?
7. Describe Ansgar's work.
8. Describe the Christianization of Russia.
9. How did medieval missions differ from modern Protestant missions?
10. What did Gregory I do for the papacy?
11. Explain these causes of the growth of the power of the Pope:
 - a. The political situation in western Europe.
 - b. The moral attitude of some Popes.
 - c. The gaining of temporal power by the Popes.

¹ See pp. 62, 63.

d. The False Decretals.

e. Missions.

f. The advance of Islam.

12. What were the causes of the separation of the Eastern and Western churches?

13. Describe the final rupture between them. What were the territories of the two churches?

READING

Bryce: "The Holy Roman Empire," chs. IV-IX, on the general history of the period.

Adams: "European History," pp. 152-198, on the same.

Workman: "The Church of the West in the Middle Ages," Vol. I, chs. I, II, on the relations of empire and church and the rise of the papacy; ch. III, on missions.

Stubbs: "How Europe Was Won for Christianity," on missions.

MacLear: "Apostles of Mediæval Europe," on the same.

Milman: "Latin Christianity," Bk. III, ch. VII, on Gregory I; Bk. IV, chs. III-V, Bk. V, chs. VIII-X, on missions.

Flick: "The Rise of the Mediæval Church," on the growth of the papacy.

Adeney: "The Greek and Eastern Churches," on the Christianization of Russia and the separation of East and West.

Fisher: "History of the Christian Church," Period IV; Period V, chs. I, II.

Moeller: "History of the Christian Church in the Middle Ages" (see contents).

CHAPTER VI

THE CHURCH IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES (CONTINUED)

(A. D. 590-1073)

C. CHRISTIANITY AT WAR WITH PAGANISM WITHIN THE CHURCH

Causes of paganism in the Church

It must now be clear that the Church during the period before us contained many people who were only slightly Christianized, more pagan than Christian. Let us briefly review the causes of this state of things. One was the action of the Roman emperors in legalizing and favoring Christianity. Crowds adopted the religion made fashionable by imperial patronage. Another cause came when the emperor Theodosius decreed that his subjects must profess Christianity in the orthodox form. Thus was inaugurated the emperors' policy of using their power to crush idolatry and constrain people to belong to the Church. The methods of the missionaries, again, resulted in the presence in the Church of thousands of Germans and other peoples who had never been converted.¹ And when peoples were forced by their own rulers² or by conquerors³ to accept Christianity, this result came in even greater measure.

¹ See p. 74.

² See pp. 40, 73.

³ See p. 67.

Thus within the Church there was a great mass of paganism, of pagan ideas about religion and morals, and pagan ways of action, carried over by these people who were Christians only in name and form. Christianity's struggle with paganism therefore had to be waged within the Church, as well as in the world without. Its great task in the Middle Ages was the conquest of the barbarians of northern and western Europe, who were to become the dominant peoples of the world. This was largely done after they entered the Church. This struggle within the Western Church was so hard that Christianity was for a time almost overcome in its own home.

Struggle of
Christianity
against
paganism in
the Church

The task of Christianity was made harder by two things wherein the times about which we are speaking differed from ours. We live in a world where Christianity has been at work like the leaven for centuries, so that it has affected all men, even those who are not personally Christians. Therefore we have governments which are in good measure forces for the righteousness which Christianity teaches and seeks to establish. We have also a public opinion which in what it praises and in what it condemns agrees with Christianity to a considerable extent. But in the times of which we are speaking neither of these things existed in western Europe. Its peoples were just emerging from barbarism and paganism. Government, except in a few cases like those of Charlemagne and Otto I, consisted of the rule of men who were themselves ungoverned and violent, and often no-

No help toward
Christian
morality from
governments
or public
opinion

toriously wicked. Furthermore, since Christianity had had so short a time to work, there was nothing like a Christian public opinion. "The traditions of society at large were undiluted heathenism."

1. Life in the Church

**Decline of
morals in the
church**

**Corruption in
the clergy**

What a battle Christianity had for existence appears in the depths to which character and conduct sank within the church. Even among the clergy moral conditions were incredibly bad. Look, for example, at Principal Workman's picture of the church in France in the eighth century, before Boniface disciplined it into some decency. "The majority of its priests were runaway slaves or criminals, who had assumed the tonsure¹ without any ordination. Its bishoprics were regarded as private estates, and were openly sold to the highest bidder. . . . The archbishop of Rouen could not read; his brother of Treves had never been ordained. . . . Drunkenness and adultery were among the lesser vices of a clergy that had become rotten to the core."² It is not too much to say that throughout Europe scandalous and shameful priests outnumbered those of worthy life. Not only ignorance and neglect of duty were frequent, but also luxurious living, gross immorality, robbery and simony, that is, the buying of clerical offices. The higher clergy were no better,

¹ The shaving of a circle at the crown of the head, which was the sign of priesthood.

² "The Church of the West in the Middle Ages," Vol. I, pp. 75, 76.

perhaps worse, than the lower. Simony was the regular and recognized way of obtaining a bishopric, and for some bishoprics there was a fixed price.

Nor was the papacy exempt. Its state during most of a hundred and fifty years beginning about 890 was vile to the last degree. The office that had been raised so high by Gregory I and Nicholas suffered every imaginable disgrace. Political rivals and their followers fought for it. Some of its occupants were notoriously guilty of all sorts of crimes. For years a family of infamous women controlled the papacy, giving it as they willed. Then the emperor Otto I, in order to rescue it from its degradation, made it subject to himself. For forty years the emperors set up and pulled down Popes, choosing, it is true, some better men than had lately borne the title. Afterwards the office fell into the hands of a noble Italian family, the Counts of Tusculum. Their possession ended with Benedict IX, whose debaucheries and robberies and murders finally roused the Roman populace to revolt and drive him out.¹ That the papacy recovered from all this shame and gained far greater power than ever before, shows how strong a hold the office had on the mind of the people of Europe.

Degradation
of the papacy

Even those who were supposed to have gone apart from the world to find Christian surround-

Monastic
corruption

¹ These facts regarding the papacy are related by Roman Catholic as well as Protestant historians. See, for example, Alzog: "Universal Church History," Vol. II, pp. 292-298.

ings and lead consecrated lives, that is, the monastics, were infected by the prevailing degradation. In fact some of the worst reports of immorality concern them. Within most monasteries conditions were not much, if at all, better than in the world without.

Moral
condition of
the people

When religious leaders, even those in the highest places, were of such character, it is needless to say much about the morals of the people of the church. By the end of the tenth century, in a large part of western Europe practically every person was in the church and was a Christian so far as name and religious ceremonies go. But Christian moral teaching had not yet had much effect on the conduct of men. While there were individuals in whose lives true Christian goodness shone, society as a whole showed little of the transforming work of Christianity. Dean Church, explaining why so many men and women in this time took up monastic life, says, "Let a man throw himself into the society of his day then, and he found himself in an atmosphere to which real religion, the religion of self-conquest and love, was simply a thing alien or unmeaning, which no one imagined himself called to think on; or else amid eager and overmastering activities, fiercely scorning and remorselessly trampling down all restraints of even common morality."¹ The wickedness and misery of the mass of men in these ages were appalling.

This state of things was due simply to paganism, present within the church and unconquered

¹ Church: "St. Anselm," p. 4.

by Christianity. This corrupt society was really a heathen society, though nominally Christian. In order to get some idea of what it was to live in the world of that time, we must keep in mind the fact that, besides being ruled largely by heathen morality, the world was swept by almost incessant fighting. Wars, great and small, among the kings and nobles, and fresh barbarian attacks filled western Europe with savagery and destruction.¹ Moreover, it was a world of gross ignorance. The ancient Greco-Roman culture had been well-nigh drowned by the flood of barbarian invasion. Knowledge, even of the most rudimentary kind, was the possession of only a few. Charlemagne's revival of learning² was the only bright spot in a state of things which makes these times deserve the name of the "Dark Ages." In such a world Christianity had the task of getting its moral teachings obeyed.

2. Worship and Popular Religion

In an earlier chapter we saw Christian worship somewhat corrupted by paganism. In this period, since there was a larger pagan element in the church, its worship showed this influence in greater degree. And not only worship, but also a whole system of religious acts and customs, witnessed to the presence of pagan religion. What Dean Milman called a "Christian mythology" grew up and formed the Christianity of many

**Paganism in
worship and
popular
religion**

¹ See beginning of Ch. V.

² See p. 67.

people—probably it would be safe to say of the mass of the people.

The one God revealed through Christ was not the only object of worship. A number of other beings received it, and in the minds of many people these others took a larger place than God. They seemed nearer and fuller of human sympathy. Chief among these was the Virgin Mary, whose worship was greatly developed. A series of festivals connected with her was added to the church year. Prayers were constantly offered to her for her intercession with God. The saints, of whom there were now many, martyrs and monastics and other holy men and women, were invoked for their protection and their availing prayers. Places, churches, individuals and societies had their saintly protectors, or patron saints. The saints had their special days for worship, and so the church calendar grew up. Canonization, that is, elevation to sainthood, was now given by regular procedure, through the decisions of the Popes. The custom of going on pilgrimage to the shrines of the saints, and to other places esteemed holy, grew greatly. Such journeys were thought to give the pilgrims merit in the sight of God. The most meritorious pilgrimage, of course, was that to the Holy Land. This, it was believed, earned forgiveness for all sins.

Mariolatry
and saint
worship

Pilgrimages

Belief in relics

Relics played a very large part in popular religion. Things said to be the bones of the apostles and the chains with which Peter was bound, for example, were treasured by their happy posses-

sors, and were believed to have the power of working miracles. Gregory I, who was a leader intellectually as well as in other respects, sought relics with devout enthusiasm and in perfect faith told stories of their wondrous powers.

In worship the central feature was the mass, as the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was now usually called.¹ This was regarded as a sacrifice constantly offered to God for the sins of the world. More and more it was believed that the bread and wine of the sacrament were the veritable flesh and blood of Jesus, though the belief was not yet a declared doctrine of the church.

The mass
central in
worship

In the popular religion there was a large element of fear, as was the case in the pagan religions which Christianity had displaced. The world was thought to be full of evil spirits, devils, who sought to injure men's bodies and souls. Against their malice the powers of angels and saints and the magic charms of holy relics must be appealed to. An awful sanctity was attributed to church buildings, to the elements of the mass, to relics, to the persons of the clergy. Stories were told and believed of how irreverent acts in churches and disrespect to priests had been followed by calamity or instant death. The power of Christianity over many people was largely a power of fear.

A religion of
fear

At first sight it seems unaccountable that Christianity should take such a form as this, so far removed from the simplicity and spirituality and

¹ See note, p. 57.

joyful trust of the religion of Jesus. But we can understand how it happened when we think that many of the people among whom this kind of Christianity grew up still had pagan ideas concerning religion.

D. DAWN AFTER THE DARK AGES

Again and again in the history of the Church Christianity has seemed almost overwhelmed by human imperfection in its own home; and then the life of Christ, the Head of the Church, ever present in his people, has shown its power and brought in better things. So it was at this time. In the eleventh century there began an awakening of life in the Western Church. A revival of religion came in a form suited to those times.

Revival of
religious life

New life in
Europe after
A. D. 1000

From the year 1000 we begin to see a change for the better in all the life of Europe. In that year, many had thought, the end of the world would come, because it would close the millennium which began with the birth of Jesus. People all over Europe had looked forward to it with dread. The years just before it and the year itself were times of general gloom and terror. After the year of doom passed, a breath of new life seemed to stir the world. Signs of progress began to appear. Of course there was real reason for this, apart from the superstitious idea about the year 1000. After centuries of war and disorder, Europe was settling down into peace. The Germans had long since ended their wanderings and found homes, and were gradually becoming civilized. The Normans

and the Danes, the last of the barbarians to attack southern Europe, had stopped their piratical ravages. The Arabs had ceased from war and were confined to a part of Spain. Europe, as it were, had rest, and could think. Christianity, which had been living and working in spite of the hindrances we have seen, had better opportunity to show its power, and did show it.

Perhaps what shocks us most in the conditions at which we have been looking is the corruption in the monasteries, supposed to be the homes of special consecration. We should say that a real revival ought to show itself there, if anywhere. And there the awakening began. For the beginnings of this movement we have to look back into the tenth century. In that time there was founded, in southeastern France, the monastery of Cluny. Here the Benedictine rule was observed in its early severity, and the monks really lived as men who had taken such vows ought to live. From Cluny there spread over France and into Germany the awakening, the conscience of existing evils and the purpose to amend life, until many monasteries were purged of their unrighteousness. New monasteries also were founded, embodying the spirit of the Cluniac reform. There was formed what was called the Cluniac congregation, a group of monasteries in France under the control of the abbot of Cluny, all of them living according to its good example.

Monastic
Reform
at Cluny

Early in the eleventh century there grew up a reforming party, determined to raise the church

The reforming
party

out of its evil case. It was composed mostly of men who had been trained in the zealous and strict life of Cluny or in monasteries under its influence. The general idea of their policy of reform was to set the church free from entanglement with worldly powers and interests. One item in their program was the abolition of simony, the purchase of offices in the church. This evil was the result of the great wealth of the church. Bishops and monasteries had attached to them large and rich lands, over which the bishops and abbots ruled just as great nobles did over their lands. Like the nobles these church officers had to own allegiance to the kings of the countries, because of their control of land in the kings' domains. Thus the civil rulers got into their hands the power of appointing bishops and abbots; and, being often irreligious men, they would sell these appointments for money. This practice was, of course, ruinous to the spiritual life of the church. Men who would buy religious offices could not be the men who ought to have the offices.

Its program;
(1) War against
simony

(2) Enforcement of clerical
celibacy

Another part of the program of reform was an attack on the general violation of clerical celibacy. Though this had long been the law of the church, it was commonly disobeyed, and many bishops and priests were married. To clerical marriage the reformers were opposed because it seemed to them that married men must be more interested in amassing property for their children than in the welfare of the church. If this and simony were abolished, they believed, the church would be in

great measure freed from the control of worldly interests. A third part of the program was a strict cleansing of the lives of the clergy. Themselves men of severe lives, these reformers hated and despised the prevalent immorality, and swore destruction to it. As a means of realizing these aims, the reforming party meant to increase the power of the Pope and secure its use for their objects.

(3) Moral discipline of the clergy

The reformers got their first chance to work out their aims in 1049, when one of them became Pope Leo IX. He was made Pope by the great emperor, Henry III, who, when the disgraceful Benedict IX sold his office, interfered in order to save the papacy from further degradation. Leo and several successors strove to carry out the plan of the reforming party, and made things somewhat better. These Popes were dominated by the man who became leader of the reformers, and who was to be the greatest of all Popes—Hildebrand.

Reforming Popes

Hildebrand was an Italian of humble birth, who though not a monk had imbibed the spirit of the monks of Cluny. Remaining in a minor church office, he was the power behind the throne in the papacy from the time of Leo IX to his own election, in 1073. He really chose Popes and molded their policy, working out steadily a great plan for the regeneration of the church, which lay clear before his far-seeing mind. It was in line with the plan of his party, but was greater with the greatness of his own intellect and character. Thus Hildebrand waited, shaping things so that when he

Hildebrand

himself became Pope he would have the fullest opportunity to accomplish his purposes. In 1073, while a requiem for Pope Alexander II was being sung in St. Peter's, the people suddenly shouted: "Hildebrand! The blessed Peter chooses Hildebrand!" At once the cardinals chose him, and he became Pope Gregory VII. What his great plans were and how he wrought them out we shall see in our next chapter.

E. LIFE AND THOUGHT IN THE EASTERN PART OF THE CHURCH

The final separation of the Eastern and Western churches occurred only a score of years before the close of this period. But for two centuries before that, as we have seen,¹ the two parts of the Church were estranged. And still further back, in the sixth century, the Eastern part of the Church began to lead a life largely separate from that of the Western.

Theological
disputes and
resulting
divisions

The Greek fondness for theological discussion showed itself in the continuance of disputes about the person of Christ, long after the question had been settled, as was supposed, by the council of Chalcedon. Of the Monophysites and the separate churches which they formed we have already spoken.² After them, in the seventh century, came the Monothelites, holding that there were two natures in Christ, but only one will governing his life. Against them the orthodox contended

¹ See p. 81.

² See pp. 62, 63.

fiercely. At the sixth general council, at Constantinople in 680, the Monothelite teachings were condemned. Though the Western part of the Church took little interest in these disputes, Pope Honorius I was drawn into the controversy of the Monothelites, and approved their views. Hence the council of Constantinople actually pronounced an anathema upon the Pope for heresy.

While Christianity in the East was miserably divided by empty wranglings over fine points of doctrine, there fell upon it the terrible attack of the Moslems. In the seventh and eighth centuries the Arab warriors of Islam conquered Syria, Palestine, part of Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and Egypt. Thus the Eastern Empire suffered irreparable loss. Nor was the Church ever afterwards as strong in the East as it had been. To be sure, the remainder of Asia Minor, the Balkan peninsula and Greece were long held by the empire, so that there the Church was defended against the tide of Islam. Moreover, the Arab rulers were comparatively tolerant toward Christians. The Christians were compelled to pay tribute, exposed to dishonor in various ways, and forbidden to build new churches; but they were allowed to keep up their worship. Nevertheless, the Church was sorely weakened where it had to live under the Moslem power.

After the Moslem conquest, Eastern Christianity began to sink into the stagnation and monotony in which for the most part it has since lived. Great disturbances were caused in the eighth

Effect of the
Moslem
conquest

Decline after
this conquest

**Image
worship
controversy**

and again in the ninth century by the attempts of certain strong emperors to abolish the worship of images¹ in the churches. This was resisted by the ignorant among the people and by the monks. Though the emperors were determined in carrying out their policy, even using persecution, they could not make the people give up their images. In 869 a synod at Constantinople declared in favor of the use of them.

Missions

A stirring of life appeared in the work of the missionaries who went to the Slavic peoples to the North, beginning in the ninth century. Among these were Methodius and Cyril, pioneers of the gospel in Moravia and Bohemia,² and those who preached in Russia.³ Since the church in Russia was from the first subject to the patriarch of Constantinople, the Christianization of this country greatly enlarged the Eastern part of the Church.

**Unprogressive-
ness**

In general, however, the condition of Christianity in the East after the Moslem conquest was one of increasing sloth and deadness. This part of the Church had its last great religious thinker in John of Damascus, in the eighth century. He wrote a full statement of Christian doctrine, according to the creeds of the Church. After him the Church in the East held stiffly to his ways of expressing Christian truth. There was no change, because there was little life. In other respects, also, the

¹ The "images" were pictures, not statues.

² See p. 73.

³ See p. 73.

Eastern part of the Church remained conservative, clinging to the old simply because it was old. In this way it weakened its service for the kingdom of God.

In this period the Nestorian Church, farther east, continued and increased the missionary work in Asia which began at its birth.¹ There were certainly Nestorian Christians in India in the seventh century, and in China in the eighth.

**Nestorian
Church**

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How did paganism come to be strong within the church?

2. What were the signs of paganism in the life of the church; in

a. The clergy.

b. The papacy.

c. Society generally?

3. Describe the signs of paganism in worship and popular religion;

a. The development of Mariolatry.

b. The development of saint worship.

c. The adoration of relics.

d. The element of fear in religion.

4. What change occurred in European life about the year 1000?

5. Describe the monastery of Cluny and the reform in monastic life caused by it.

6. What was the program of the reforming party of the eleventh century?

7. Who was the great leader of the reformers? Describe his influence in the papacy before he became Pope.

8. What was the effect of theological disputes on the church in the East?

9. What was the effect on it of the Arab conquest?

¹ See p. 62.

100 GROWTH OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

10. What was the leading characteristic of the church in the East?

READING

Workman: "The Church of the West in the Middle Ages," Vol. I, ch. II, on the state of morals in the church; ch. IV, on the reformers and Hildebrand.

Milman: "Latin Christianity," Bk. III, ch. VII, on worship and popular religion; Bk. V, chs. XI-XIV, Bk. VI, chs. I-III, on the papacy, the reformers and Hildebrand.

Moeller: "History of the Christian Church in the Middle Ages," First Period, ch. XI, Second Period, ch. V. on worship and popular religion.

Schaff: "History of the Christian Church," Vol. III, sections 81-86, on the same.

Workman: "The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal," pp. 219-236, on Cluny and the reformers.

Stephens: "Hildebrand and His Times."

CHAPTER VII

THE CHURCH AT THE HEIGHT OF THE MIDDLE AGES

(A. D. 1073-1294)

I. THE WESTERN CHURCH

A. THE MEDIEVAL PAPACY

1. Hildebrand

At the end of the preceding period we saw coming on the scene at Rome the man of whom another who was like him in imperial ambition said, "If I were not Napoleon, I should wish to have been Hildebrand." Hildebrand found the papacy in weakness and humiliation, and made it the greatest power in Europe. He was the greatest of the Popes, the chief builder of the medieval papacy. Gregory I before him had done much at the structure, and after him Innocent III carried the work farther, but the master builder was Hildebrand. In his mind there rose an ideal for the papacy and the church which dazzles us with its daring height. His genius planned a policy for the purpose of turning this ideal into fact, and his iron will made it a fact in good measure.

a. The Church to Be Freed from the World

The policy of Hildebrand had two great parts. The first was to free the church from the control

of the world. This was the purpose of the reforming party of which he had become the leader. Hildebrand determined to deliver the church from slavery to civil rulers and to worldly interests. In order to accomplish this, one necessary thing was a change in the method of choosing the head of the church. For many years the emperors had controlled the choice of Popes. During the papacy of Nicholas II (1058-1061), when Hildebrand was really directing affairs, he procured the establishment of the college of cardinals, with power to elect the Pope. The emperor's power in the matter was reduced to practically nothing. Thus the head of the church was chosen by the church, through its officers, not forced upon it by some powerful ruler.

Papal elections
freed from
imperial
control

Another thing necessary for the church's freedom was to do away with the appointment of bishops by kings. This practice was known as "lay investiture," because the bishop was invested with certain symbols of his office by the ruler, a layman. We should all agree with Hildebrand about this. The church could not allow its chief officers, the men who directed its work, to be appointed for it by the civil authorities of the countries in which they were to serve. It must choose them itself. The Scotch Presbyterians who, in 1843, left the Church of Scotland and formed the Free Church, because they could not endure that the ministers should be chosen by the great landholders of the parishes instead of by the congregations, were asserting Hildebrand's principle. The

Abolition of
lay investiture

principle is that the church cannot be a true church of Christ if it does not choose its own teachers and rulers. Moreover, Hildebrand saw clearly that so long as civil rulers appointed to bishoprics and other church places, there would be simony.¹ The only way to get rid of this great evil, which was choking the life of the church, was to cut out its roots by removing church office from the control of kings.

Soon after he became Pope, Hildebrand began a determined war upon lay investiture. But the kings were most unwilling to lose the appointing of bishops. Many of the bishops held large and valuable lands. Naturally the rulers insisted upon choosing those who held such great possessions in their countries. Thus Hildebrand was drawn into conflict with the most powerful men of Europe. Characteristically, he did not shrink from the conflict, but rather forced it, and struck first at the most powerful opponent, the ruler of the German or Holy Roman Empire.² Here the two great powers of Europe, the church and the empire, finally entered the inevitable conflict.

The emperor, Henry IV, an obstinate, tyrannical man, refused consent to the Pope's position on the question of the appointment of bishops, and in other ways resisted him. After some parley and threatening, Hildebrand excommunicated Henry and declared him deposed from his throne. Now Henry had many enemies among his subjects, and

Contest with
civil rulers

Contest with
emperor
Henry IV

¹ See pp. 86-87, 94.

² See p. 68.

parts of his domain were already in revolt. The papal excommunication strengthened the rebellion, and Henry found himself unable to quell it. He was forced to make most humiliating terms with his subjects, the great nobles of Germany. He was to submit himself absolutely to the Pope, and was to obtain from him within a year release from excommunication, on penalty of forever losing his throne. The decision as to whether he should keep the throne was to be made at the end of the year by a German diet,¹ presided over by the Pope. Meanwhile he must live in retirement, and make no attempt to use his imperial authority. The nobles planned at this diet to choose another in Henry's place, and so be rid of him.

Henry saw one way out. He could try to get his excommunication removed at once, instead of waiting a year. If he thus made his peace with the Pope, his position in regard to his throne would be much stronger. He determined to stake everything on this one chance. With his queen and their infant child, he set out in midwinter on a hasty journey to Italy, crossing the Alps through deep snows and great hardships. At the castle of Canossa, in Lombardy, in January of 1077, he found the Pope. Hildebrand refused to see him, and for three days friends of both debated terms of reconciliation. The inexorable Pope would hear to nothing but Henry's resignation of his crown, and to this Henry would not consent. Finally he determined to gain pardon by abject

Henry at
Canossa

¹ The diet was the assembly of the nobles of the empire.

humiliation. Early one winter morning, barefoot, and wearing only a coarse woolen shirt, the emperor knocked at the castle gate. All day he stood and knocked, in vain. For two days more the monarch of the Holy Roman Empire thus implored mercy. Finally Hildebrand relented so far as to discuss conditions of pardon. The outcome was that the excommunication was lifted from the emperor. But he had to promise that he would submit his title to his crown to the decision of his nobles, and that in case he should keep it he would obey the Pope in all things concerning the church.

Thus at Canossa the Pope triumphed over the emperor. But Hildebrand's victory proved not so complete as it seemed there. He had overreached himself. His arrogance and cruel severity toward the holder of the greatest kingly power on earth, whom men regarded as ruling by God's appointment, roused indignation and hostility. In Germany feeling turned in Henry's favor. He gathered followers and fought for his throne. Scorning the thunders of Hildebrand, who again excommunicated and deposed him, he led an army into Italy and entered Rome. It was during troubles which followed this that Hildebrand left Rome, never to return. As he lay dying a few years later, he said, "I have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, and yet I die in exile."

Yet the famous scene at Canossa did mean a victory for Hildebrand and the church. The victory was assured forty-five years later by an agreement between the emperor and the Pope of that

Outcome of
contest be-
tween Pope
and emperor

time. All these years the contest continued, but in 1122 it was ended by a compromise. The bishops were to be elected by the clergy, and the Popes were to invest them with their spiritual office. The emperor was to invest them with their lands and their authority as temporal rulers. Thus the emperor got the power over those who held land in his domains, on which he had insisted. But the church carried its point, that it must be free to choose its own officers.

Abolition of
clerical
marriage

The third thing which Hildebrand thought necessary for the church's freedom from the world was the abolition of clerical marriage. Concerning this he shared the opinion of the reforming party to which he belonged.¹ He thought that married priests could not put the church's welfare first in their lives, for their chief interest must be to provide for their children. It seemed to him that they could not help being entangled in worldly affairs, to the neglect of their religious duties. Of course the experience of the parts of the Christian Church where there has been a married ministry has shown that the fears felt by him and his party were groundless.

Reasons for
Hildebrand's
opposition to
clerical
marriage

But in order to understand Hildebrand's views on this subject, we need to remember that to many of the positions held by the clergy there were attached valuable lands. This was especially true in the case of the bishops, as we have said. Many of them ruled large territories, like great nobles or princes. We can see how Hildebrand came to

¹ See p. 94.

think that men so situated, if they had families, would be too strongly tempted to devote themselves to looking out for them. He feared that thus the ministry of the church would become a hereditary caste, caring principally for its own possessions. It should also be remembered that while clerical marriage was common, it was strictly forbidden by church law, and that in many cases it was a cloak for immorality. Furthermore, much of Hildebrand's whole policy finds explanation in his intense belief that the monk's life is the only true Christian life. Though, strange to say, he was not himself a monk, he was leader of a reforming party composed of monks, and he strove to bring the life of all the clergy of the church into accord with the monkish ideal. One way to accomplish this was to make all the clergy celibates.

Against clerical marriage Hildebrand fought bitterly with every weapon of church law and discipline and of popular agitation. He broke up existing marriages by a cruel persecution. The monks under his command stirred up the people to abhor married priests. Though he did not secure the entire abolition of clerical marriage, he greatly decreased it, and created a strong and lasting feeling in the church against it. From that time the general sentiment of the church condemned it.

His war
against it

We have seen what things Hildebrand thought necessary in order to free the church from the world. We have also seen that he meant to achieve these things by the use of the papal power.

The Pope to
be an absolute
monarch over
the church

For carrying out his policy, it was needful that the Pope should be supreme in the church. His idea was to make the church an absolute monarchy, under the bishop of Rome. All other bishops, all the clergy, all monastics, were to be absolutely subject to him. By bold and sweeping assertions of the supremacy of the successor of Peter, backed up by his power of excommunication, he to a great extent succeeded in his purpose. From his time the Pope's will was law for the church far more than it had been before.

b. The Church to Be Supreme over the World

But so far we have seen only a part of Hildebrand's great dream. He planned not only to free the church from the world, but also when this had been done, to make it supreme over the world. The church, ruled by the Pope, was to be the sovereign power of the world. To it all other powers were to be subject. From the Pope, the church's representative and head, all kings and rulers were to take orders. They were to exercise authority under the Pope's supervision. The Pope was to have the right to depose them and release their subjects from obedience to them if they disobeyed his supreme, divine authority. The world was to be a kind of United States, in which all kingdoms were to be governed according to the sovereign will of the head of the church.

Hildebrand's
idea of the
papacy as the
supreme power
of the world

This is the stupendous Hildebrandine idea of the papacy; the Pope is to be supreme ruler of the church, and as the head of the church he is

to be supreme ruler of the world. To comprehend this idea taxes our minds, and it is a mark of Hildebrand's greatness that his mind first conceived it. In the light of the history since his time, we can see that the idea was a colossal mistake. Such a papacy as he conceived would be destructive to national life, to liberty, and to Christianity. But in order to understand Hildebrand we must try to look at things with his light, not with ours.

We all believe that Christianity ought to rule the world. Now for the men of western Europe in the Middle Ages, to say this was to say that the church ought to rule the world; because for them Christianity and the one church in which they saw Christianity embodied were identical. They did not think of Christianity apart from the church, that is, the church which they knew, the Roman Church. There were a few dissenters who made a distinction between these two;¹ but probably Hildebrand, living all his life in ecclesiastical surroundings, had never heard of such an idea as that of Christianity apart from the church. And this was true of practically all men of his time. A man of his age and his training, having a desire to make Christianity supreme over the world, could not help thinking that the only practical way to bring this about was to make the church the supreme authority in the world.

Moreover, for a man of Hildebrand's age and training the supremacy of the church meant the supremacy of the papacy. Unquestionably almost

Thought of
Middle Ages
on this subject

¹ On the dissenters of the Middle Ages, see Ch. X.

all Christian men of that day in Europe regarded the Pope as the divinely appointed head of the church. Therefore, they would have said, if the church was to have authority over the world, that authority must be exercised through the Pope. For them, the sovereignty of Christianity over the world would be attained by the sovereign rule of the papacy. These facts about the thought of Hildebrand's time we must keep in mind, if we wish to do justice to him and the men who shared his ideas.

2. *Innocent III*

Innocent III
realized
Hildebrand's
idea

Hildebrand's idea of the papacy's supremacy over the world was not so fully realized in his own pontificate as in that of the great Innocent III (1198-1216). Under him the medieval church reached the summit of its power. His clear and strong mind grasped in its fullness the tremendous meaning of the Hildebrandine idea. The overwhelming claims which it implied he did not shrink from. The Pope, he said, "stands in the midst between God and man; . . . less than God, more than man. He judges all, is judged by none." Astute, fearless, inflexible, he really attained in great measure such a power as Hildebrand dreamed of.

Innocent and
the rulers of
Europe

Innocent made and unmade emperors, successfully asserting that their crown came to them from the Pope. He forced King Philip of France and King John of England to obey him, the cause of conflict in France being the king's putting away

his wife for another woman, and in England a dispute over the archbishopric of Canterbury. The weapon which he used to bring these monarchs to terms was the interdict, which caused the suspension of all religious services in the countries concerned. The churches were closed. The sacraments, which people universally thought the means of salvation, were not administered. The dead lay unburied. Such popular outcry arose in France and England that the kings had to submit. John even surrendered to the Pope his kingdoms of England and Ireland, and received them back as feudal lands. This means that he acknowledged them to be the property of the Pope, which he was allowed to hold, paying yearly tribute as acknowledgement of the Pope's sovereignty. Innocent was recognized as overlord of the kingdom of Sicily, and from him the king of Aragon received his crown. Almost everywhere in Europe he asserted his authority, and almost always with success.

His only noteworthy failure was in England. It was after King John's submission to the Pope that the barons, unable longer to endure his abominable and oppressive reign, compelled him to sign Magna Charta, the charter which is the corner stone of English freedom. Innocent took the side of the king, since John had now become an obedient son of the church. He issued a bull¹ annulling Magna Charta and ordering the barons to submit themselves to their king. They ignored his arrogant demands, however, and only his death about

¹ The decrees of the Popes were called "bulls."

The papacy
overthrows
the Empire
and is supreme

this time saved him from a conspicuous defeat.

Thus under Innocent III the papacy ruled the world of western Europe with almost undisputed sway. Or, we may say, the church ruled the world, through its head, the Pope. Through the thirteenth century the church remained at this height of power. During this century the papacy finally overthrew its great rival, the Holy Roman Empire. Between Popes Gregory IX and Innocent IV and the emperor Frederick II there was a long war of both words and arms. In 1248 it ended in total defeat for Frederick. After his death two years later his little son held a shadowy power for a few years, and then there was no emperor for nineteen years. So the papacy held the field triumphant, and ruled without a rival. At the end of the nineteen years the empire was revived by the election of an emperor; but it never was so strong as before the papal victory.

B. THE CHURCH RULING THE WESTERN WORLD

The church's
control
over life

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the church ruled human life in Western Europe. It was an international society, extending into and over all kingdoms. Its government had authority far exceeding that of any civil government. For what the church bound and loosed on earth would surely, men believed, be bound and loosed in heaven; and the church was so widespread and well organized as to reach all men with its sway. On every part of human life the church laid its controlling hand; nothing that men did it left

alone. Probably no human organization has ever exercised such power.

1. The Extent of the Church

In A. D. 1200 only a little of Europe was outside Christendom. In eastern and southern Russia there were heathen Asiatics. Southern Spain was held by the Moors, and there Mohammedanism ruled. The inhabitants of the eastern and southeastern shores of the Baltic Sea were still heathen. In the twelfth century they were forced by long and bloody wars, during which some real missionary work was done, to accept Christianity.

Europe
nominally
Christian in
the thirteenth
century

Thus in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Christianity was the religion of almost all of Europe. By this is meant that church organization covered most of the continent, that knowledge of Christianity was possible for almost all of its inhabitants, and that Christianity was the official religion of all kingdoms, except the Moorish. In this nominally Christian continent Russia and Greece and most of the Balkan peninsula¹ belonged to the Eastern Church. The rest of Europe belonged to the Western, or Roman Church. Thus this great international organization included the nations which were to have most influence in the world for many centuries.

2. The Church's War against Islam—The Crusades

In this time of its largest power the Western Church made a great and long-continued effort

¹ The Eastern Empire held Constantinople until 1453.

to increase its territory by capturing from the Moslems the Holy Land. This was in the Crusades, the series of wars which Western Christendom waged against the Moslem power in the East during two hundred years (1096-1291). This great movement of West against East was vastly influential in religion, politics, commerce and intellectual life. Its story is full of wonderful scenes and fascinating personalities. No part of history contains more romance and color. We do not by any means sum up the whole truth about the Crusades when we say that they were a great attempt of the church to enlarge its territory; yet this is part of the truth. This is not to say that the church caused the crusades. As is true of all great movements, they were brought about by causes that had been working for many years.

Causes of the
Crusades;
(1) Custom of
pilgrimage to
Palestine

One of these was the custom, long prevalent, of going on pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Thousands had made the toilsome journey to Palestine, and visited and prayed at the places associated with our Lord's life, above all at the holy sepulcher. Of all the things that men could do to win favor in the sight of God and earn his forgiveness, the pilgrimage to the Holy Land was accounted the most efficacious. The palmers, as returned pilgrims were called, from the palm leaves which they brought back, were everywhere venerated as holy men, all the rest of their lives. Wherever they went they were known by their distinctive dress and were regarded as entitled to receive hospitality from all Christians. Pilgrims went sometimes

alone, sometimes in companies, often of large numbers. Rich and poor, noble and serf, priest and layman, went on pilgrimage. This old and general custom led naturally to the Crusades, which, in one way of looking at them, were great organized pilgrimages.

The dangerous advance of Islam was another cause. How far the Arabs conquered and extended their religion we saw in Chapter V. After the eighth century their fighting spirit subsided, and they and their religion made no important forward movement. But in the eleventh century, the Seljuk Turks, a barbarous, warlike people from central Asia, took from the Arabs the control of the Moslem Empire. They brought to Islam a new aggressiveness. They conquered a great part of Asia Minor, and threatened Constantinople. Whereas the Arabs had become on the whole rather tolerant toward Christians, the Turks hated Christianity fiercely, and showed this by cruelty to pilgrims to the Holy Land. Their coming caused Christian Europe to feel that it must unite to put down Christianity's great enemy, and especially to rescue the holy sepulcher from the hands of unbelievers.

A third cause was the love of fighting and warlike adventure which was so strong in that age, particularly in the upper classes of society. The life most honored among them was that of the true knight, the life of warfare in defense of the weak and in behalf of right and Christianity. While many of these men were far enough from

(2) Advance of
Islam. The
Turks

(3) Love of
fighting and
knightly
enterprise

true knights in personal character, still they sincerely regarded the knight as the ideal man. Now the Crusades, wars against unbelievers for the possession of the Holy Land, offered an enterprise perfectly satisfying this spirit of chivalry. Here was opportunity to fight, and to fight for what were thought the noblest objects.

(4) Religious
revival

But probably the greatest factor in producing the Crusades was the growing religious enthusiasm of the times. We have seen that there was a revival of religion in western Europe in the eleventh century. This stronger religious spirit made men desire to do something for the spread of Christianity; and this they could do by fighting the unbelievers. It made them also feel a keener interest in the salvation of their own souls; and the thing counting most for salvation, they thought, was to go to the Holy Land, as soldiers of the cross. Not only the humble and the ignorant were ruled by such desires and thoughts, but also the noble and rich and powerful, the men who controlled the affairs of the world.

The call for
the First
Crusade

These forces were working in the life of western Europe in the eleventh century, making its people ready to enter upon the Crusades. Then the call of the church, through the Popes, gave the final impulse and set the forces of Christendom in motion. The first Crusade was proclaimed in 1095 by Pope Urban II. The Eastern emperor Alexius, hard pressed by the Turks, had appealed to the Pope for help. At a church council at Clermont, in France, where a great

throng was assembled, Urban in a fiery speech pleaded for the rescue of the holy sepulcher from the disgrace of possession by unbelievers. The multitude was swept away with wild enthusiasm. At once many "took the cross," fastening upon themselves cloth crosses in token of their vow to join the crusade. The Pope's appeal was carried through France and the Rhine Valley by wandering preachers, chief among whom was Peter the Hermit. Wherever they went, their words roused the people as at Clermont.

The next year the Crusaders started. Several great bands of poor men, really fanatical mobs, set out for the Holy Land. Naturally these expeditions came to nothing. Two of them, one led by Peter, went through Constantinople into Asia Minor, and were destroyed by the Turks at Nicea. But three strong armies of knights, led by great nobles, marched across Asia Minor and after a fearful battle captured Jerusalem. They set up what is called the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, whose first king was Count Baldwin of Flanders. Thus the holy sepulcher was in Christian hands, and Palestine was again a part of Christendom.

After this Crusade seven others were made. They were occasioned by victories of the Moslems, and after 1187 by the fact that Jerusalem was again in their hands. The earlier Crusades were started by the calls of Popes. Thus the church held the leadership of this great movement of united Christian Europe. But later the leadership passed into the hands of the kings. The re-

**The First
Crusade**

**Later
Crusades**

ligious enthusiasm without which the Crusades could never have taken place diminished somewhat with the passage of years. Motives of conquest and wealth grew more prominent.

Children's Crusade

But it was in the second century of the Crusades that the religious feeling connected with them found perhaps its most wonderful expression. This was in the pathetic Children's Crusade (1212). The preaching of two boys roused thousands of boys and girls of France and the Rhine Valley to go to rescue the holy sepulcher. They left their homes and started for Palestine, believing that with God's help they would succeed where men had failed. A multitude of them actually took ships at Marseilles for the Holy Land. But the shipmasters were slave-traders, and sold the boys and girls into servitude and shame. This story, almost incredible to us, shows what a state of religious excitement the idea of going on crusade produced in Europe.

Results of the Crusades

The Crusades failed of their great object. At the end of the two centuries Jerusalem remained, as ever since, in Moslem possession. The greatest attempt ever made to extend Christendom by force came to nothing. Yet the Crusades had very important results, among which we can consider only those that had to do directly with Christianity. Resulting from religious feeling, they in turn strengthened its hold. The tremendous power which religious motives exercised in western Europe at the height of the Middle Ages came in part from this great expression of religious en-

thusiasm, in which all its nations united. The Crusades also strengthened the authority of papacy; for they gave the Popes the opportunity of taking the lead in an undertaking which made the strongest possible popular appeal. One reason why Innocent III came nearer realizing Hildebrand's ideal for the papacy than Hildebrand himself did, was that between them there came more than a century of crusading, greatly increasing the papal power. The Crusades also increased intolerance. Fighting against unbelievers abroad made men more ready to use force against those nearer home who did not submit to the church's teaching. After a century of Crusades came the terrible war against the Albigensian heretics of southeastern France,¹ and the establishment of the Inquisition.²

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is Hildebrand's place in the history of the papacy?
2. What were the great features of his policy?
3. Explain these parts of his plan for freeing the church from the world:
 - a. The election of the Pope by the cardinals.
 - b. The abolition of lay investiture.
 - c. The abolition of clerical marriage.
4. Describe his conflict with Henry IV. What were its results?
5. What did Hildebrand do for the power of the Pope in the church?

¹ See p. 132, and Vol. II, pp. 6-7.

² See pp. 131-132.

120 GROWTH OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

6. What was Hildebrand's idea of the position of the Pope in the world?

7. What does this idea mean, when interpreted in the light of the thoughts of that time?

8. Describe the power of the papacy under Innocent III.

9. Describe the final conflict between the church and the empire.

10. How great was the power of the church over human life in western Europe?

11. How far was Europe Christian in A. D. 1200? What was the extent of the Western or Roman Church at this time? Why were the nations included in it especially important?

12. What were the Crusades?

13. Explain these causes of the Crusades:

a. The custom of pilgrimage to Palestine.

b. The advance of Islam.

c. The spirit of chivalry.

d. The religious revival of the eleventh century.

14. Describe the First Crusade.

15. What were the results of the Crusades?

READING

Workman: "The Church of the West in the Middle Ages," Vol. I, chs. IV, V, Vol. II, ch. I, on Hildebrand and the conflict of church and empire; Vol. II, ch. III, on Innocent III; Vol. II, ch. II, on the Moslem conquests and the Crusades.

Bryce: "The Holy Roman Empire," chs. X, XI, XIII, on church and empire.

Milman: "Latin Christianity," Books VII-X, on the Popes of the period, the conflict of church and empire, and the Crusades; especially Book IX, on Innocent III.

Schaff: "History of the Christian Church," Vol. V, Part I, chs. II-VI, on the papacy and the church and empire; ch. VII, on the Crusades; ch. IX, on missions.

Stephens: "Hildebrand and His Times."

Medley: "The Church and the Empire," ch. XIV, on church extension in this period.

Article "Crusades," in "Encyclopedia Britannica."

Ludlow: "The Age of the Crusades."

Adams: "Civilization in the Middle Ages," ch. XI, on the Crusades and their results.

Thatcher and McNeal's "Source Book of Medieval History" contains many important original documents; pp. 132-259 on the papacy; pp. 513-544 on the Crusades.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHURCH AT THE HEIGHT OF THE MIDDLE AGES (CONTINUED)

(A. D. 1073-1294)

I. THE WESTERN CHURCH (Continued)

B. THE CHURCH RULING THE WESTERN WORLD (Continued)

3. The Wealth of the Church

Property of
the church

In order to understand the overwhelming power of the Roman Church in the Middle Ages, we need to realize not only its extent in territory, but also the greatness of its possessions. Its wealth consisted of lands, buildings used for religious purposes, with their furniture and ornaments, which often were very costly, and other buildings. Much of the church's land had come to it by gift from devout persons. Much also was held on feudal tenure¹ by bishops and monasteries. There were also the Papal States, a large region in central Italy of which the Pope was sovereign.² In one way and another the church held a large part of the land of western Europe. Probably it would not be far out of the way to say that in France,

¹ This means that kings had granted to bishops and monasteries lands which they were allowed to hold and enjoy, on condition of supplying the king with a certain number of soldiers in war and paying him a certain portion of the proceeds of the lands.

² See p. 78.

Germany and England it held a quarter of the land. In Italy and Spain it had more.

A vast income flowed to the church from these lands, from the tithes, which were church taxes paid by all persons, from fees for religious services, and from the sale of indulgences.¹ The Pope had an income of his own, from the Papal States, from Peter's pence, a contribution made by the faithful everywhere, from taxes on the clergy, from payments of bishops in connection with their obtaining office, and from fees of many kinds. Its income

Thus this great international church was the richest power in Europe, far surpassing any government in financial resources. Even if men had not believed in its divine authority, it would have had tremendous influence by reason of its wealth.

It ought to be remembered, however, that the church maintained extensive charities. In our time a vast amount of charitable work is done by governments and by private organizations and institutions not connected with churches. In the Middle Ages there was very little of this. Practically all that was done for the relief of need was done by the church. While no doubt much of the wealth of the church was used selfishly, large sums were spent for the sick and the poor. Charitable use
of wealth

4. *The Organization of the Church*

The Pope was the monarch of the church, and nearly an absolute monarch. All bishops exercised their authority in obedience to him. Furthermore The Pope's
powers

¹ See p. 129.

the Popes constantly asserted an immediate authority, going over the heads of bishops and directly ruling affairs in their dioceses. While bishops were nominally elected, from the time of Innocent III the Popes more and more controlled the choice of them. Most of the hundreds of thousands of monks were under the direct control of the Pope, which gave him enormous power. Papal decrees were accepted as practically equal in authority to decisions of church councils. With the Pope was the last appeal in all cases arising in the church courts. From the civil courts also many cases were appealed to him.

Powers and
duties of the
bishops

Under the Pope were the archbishops, ruling "provinces" composed of several dioceses. Then came the bishops, each governing his diocese. The bishop had general charge of church affairs in his diocese. He had the oversight of its clergy, looked after charities, and supervised schools. He held court for the trial of cases under church law. He only could give confirmation and ordination. Because of their great holdings in land, many archbishops and bishops were powerful temporal as well as spiritual rulers. Their wealth enabled them to live in princely state, and they could put armies in the field.

Powers and
duties of
parish priests

The person through whom the common people came into immediate contact with the church was, of course, the parish priest. The medieval priest had a power never seen in the modern world. Because in his keeping were the sacraments, which were believed to be necessary for salvation, he

wielded a dread authority. Through the confessional he held the conduct of his people under his inspection. He gave the boys and girls religious instruction, and sometimes elementary general education. Since schools were few, what he gave was all the education that many of the poor received. He dispensed charity out of the alms box of the church. The priest was minister, school-teacher, police force, judge in small cases, and superintendent of the poor, all in one. Not all priests performed all these duties, for among them were much laziness, ignorance and immorality. But tremendous power belonged to the priest's office, and we must realize this in order to understand the church's control over human life in the Middle Ages.

Besides this ordinary organization which we have been describing, the church had at its service another very powerful kind of organization, in the monastic orders. In the story of the Cluniac reform movement we have seen how influential monasticism was in the church. After a while this movement spent its force, and monastic life began to fall away again from its ideals. The needed reform and revival came in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. Several new orders of monks were founded, and many new monasteries were established. Chief among these new orders was the Cistercian, to which belonged many monasteries now famous, though in ruins, such as Fountains Abbey in England. The leader of the Cistercians, and the inspirer of much of this re-

Monastics

**Monastic
revival**

The Cistercians

vival of enthusiasm for monastic life, was Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, one of the best and greatest men of the Middle Ages.¹ Within forty years five hundred abbeys of his order were established, and into them went thousands of men, many of them the best men of their time. In the Cistercian abbeys, under the influence of the saintly Bernard, monastic life appeared once more reformed and made more worthy of its old ideals. This is true also of other orders founded at this time.

**Monasticism
and the papacy**

Originally every monastery acknowledged the authority of the bishop of the diocese in which it was situated. But the Popes encroached upon the bishops in this as in other respects, and more and more took monasteries under their own control. Then came the Cistercians, who from the first were governed immediately by the Pope. Their example strengthened the tendency toward papal control of other monastics. In the end most of the monks obeyed the Pope only. Monasticism and the papacy, the two principal institutions of the medieval church, were closely bound together. Throughout Europe were scattered thousands of monasteries, many of them possessing rich landed properties, filled with men who owned no master but the Pope. Here was a chief bulwark of the papal power.

**Service of the
monks**

Western Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was a much more civilized and orderly world than it was in the earlier ages of monasticism. Hence there was less need for some of the kinds of service which had been given by the

¹ See pp. 141-144.

monasteries. Still they continued to be very useful to the world. We cannot be too grateful to the monks for their work for literature and learning in making many copies of books and preserving them in their libraries. The monasteries gave other services, touching more nearly the life of the common people. Their schools provided free education. When the universities arose (about 1200), higher learning mostly left the monks' cloisters and sought a home in these new institutions; but the monastery schools still gave the best that there was in education below the university level. Their hospitals cared for the sick and for poor travelers. Their almsgiving was often generous. In plague and famine, horrors familiar to the Middle Ages, the stricken and the famished found more help in the monks' houses than anywhere else.

Doubtless there was much corruption in medieval monastic life, in spite of all reforms. The testimony of monks and nuns of that time leaves no room for doubt about this. Yet, as Principal Workman says, "It is incontestable that until the end of the fourteenth century the monks as a body were far better than their age." In the time which we are now studying, the worst fault of the monastic orders was not personal immorality, but selfishness, resulting from wealth. Though reformers constantly fought against it, most monasteries acquired property, and many of them great property. It came by gift, and by the labor of the monks. Growing wealth caused the monks to care more for the possessions of their houses and

Monastic
corruption

the comforts thus procured than for service to others or the cultivation of their own spiritual lives.

Of the great Franciscan and Dominican orders, which may be called monastic, but which differed much from the earlier orders, we shall speak in the next chapter.

5. The Discipline and Law of the Church

Discipline was the church's chief method of giving moral training to its people. In modern Protestant churches this is given by Christian teaching, in sermons, Sunday school, and private conversation, and by personal influence. But the medieval church gave it by its discipline. As we saw in Chapter IV, this was introduced on a large scale when a great mass of barbarians was thrown in upon the church, who had to be schooled into civilized and Christian living. Through the Middle Ages discipline had been developed until in the time we are now considering it had become an elaborate system.

Confession,
penance and
absolution

All persons were required to confess to a priest at least once a year.¹ Those who confessed had to do penance according to the degree of their sins. Penance consisted of acts involving sacrifice—for example, fastings, scourgings, pilgrimages—the performance of which was accepted as proof of

¹The Lateran Council of 1215, in the reign of Innocent III, made annual confession obligatory upon those who had reached years of discretion. Thus what the church had long been requiring became formally part of its law.

true sorrow for sin. Books prescribing in great detail the penances proper to various kinds of sins were much used by the priests. The idea of the penitential system was that men would be kept from wrongdoing by the knowledge that it would bring upon them heavy tasks to obtain absolution. When the penance had been done, the priest pronounced absolution. In the early Middle Ages this was generally considered a declaration that God had forgiven the sinner. Later the idea prevailed that the church, through its priests, could not merely declare but actually give forgiveness. The church, it was thought, had the divine forgiveness to bestow upon men. Thus the priest's absolution was a real release from sin.

By confession, penance and absolution, it was taught, the guilt of sin was removed, and with the guilt the eternal punishment due to sin. But there still remained what were called the temporal consequences of sin, the chief part of which were the pains of purgatory. This was a state of purifying punishment through which the sinner must pass before entering final blessedness. The church taught that it had power to shorten these pains for those who while still on earth satisfied its requirements. Such a lightening of purgatory was called an indulgence. Indulgences could be obtained by the doing of acts like those required for penance. In the late Middle Ages they were sold for money, and it was taught that people could obtain indulgences not only for themselves but also for those who had died.

**Purgatory and
indulgences**

We find it hard to understand this system of discipline. For we know that every human being can go straight to God and speak to him and obtain his forgiveness, and that therefore no priest is needed to stand between men and God. We know also that great errors and evils arose from this cumbersome machinery. We need to remember that the whole thing was the church's way of training and curbing the strong, lawless human nature with which it had to deal in the heathen or half-heathen peoples of western Europe.

Treatment of
the refractory;
excommunica-
tion

On those who would not submit to its discipline the church inflicted punishments. There were lesser penalties, such as suspension from church privileges and fines. For great offenses the penalty was excommunication. This was expulsion from the church, with deprivation of its ministries. For the medieval man this was a dreadful fate. The faithful children of the church were forbidden to hold intercourse of any sort with an excommunicated person, and since practically everyone was in the church, he was avoided by nearly all men. In some countries he lost his legal rights and was deemed an outlaw. Thus the excommunicate was virtually cast out of human society. And since to lack the sacraments of the church and to die outside its communion meant loss of salvation, he was regarded as doomed to eternal punishment. The fear of excommunication gave power to the church in all its dealings with men. Even great kings quailed before this terrible weapon.

The church's control over human life was exercised not only by its discipline, but also by its law, administered by its own courts.¹ In the Middle Ages all men were under both civil law, that of the countries where they lived, and church or canon law. We have called the church a great international government. Like all governments, it had its law, which consisted of the decisions of councils and Popes. It had its own courts, those of bishops and archbishops and the Pope. Certain kinds of cases, such as those involving wills, always went to the church courts. Cases involving the clergy also went to them, so that the clergy were not subject to the law of the land where they lived. Besides, cases of almost all kinds could be brought before the church courts on some ground or other. This was so much done that they became as powerful as the civil courts.

A very important part of the legal machinery **The Inquisition** of the church, and one of its chief means of control over life, was the Inquisition. This was the church's organization for running down and punishing heresy, or dissent from its teachings. In the eleventh, and still more in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, dissent became widespread. The twelfth century saw two strong, organized bodies of dissenters, the Cathari and the Waldenses.² A few men like Bernard and Dominic thought that heresy should be dealt with by teaching and per-

¹ Properly speaking, the system of penance was part of the great structure of church law.

² On medieval dissenters, see Vol. II, pp. 5-8.

suation, not by force. But in general the church thought of no policy but repression. Heresy was rebellion, and must be crushed.

First the war against it was intrusted to the bishops; but dissent kept on growing. Then came Innocent III, who hated this rebellion against the church with all his heart. His spirit was shown by his instigation of the bloodthirsty crusade against the Albigenses, heretics of Provence, which lasted more than twenty years and caused the death of thousands. Innocent felt that there was need for a centralized organization, covering the whole church, devoted to the suppression of heresy. Under him and his successors, in the first half of the thirteenth century, there was developed the papal Inquisition. About the same time the civil power supplied conditions favorable to its work, for several governments made severe laws against heresy. In 1224 the emperor Frederick II made it punishable by death. The Inquisition was a combination of a police force and a judicial system. It worked everywhere, vigilantly, secretly, patiently, remorselessly. It allowed the accused in its tribunals no means of defense against charges, and it almost never gave acquittal. It regularly used horrible tortures to extort confessions. It had the help of the civil power in hunting heretics and inflicting death sentences.

Medieval
feeling against
heresy

In this policy of crushing heresy the church had the support of general opinion. To the medieval man heresy was the worst of crimes. For it was breaking the unity of the church, and he

regarded an attack on the church as an attack upon the Christian faith. In his mind the faith and the organization which embodied it were one and the same, so that rebellion against one was rebellion against the other. Moreover, since Christianity was considered the foundation of civilized society, the medieval man regarded heretics, who disobeyed the Christian Church, just as most men nowadays regard anarchists. The men of the Middle Ages had no idea of freedom of thought and conscience. This idea Christians were very slow to learn, and have not even yet altogether learned.

6. The Worship of the Church

In the worship which the medieval church provided for its people, by far the largest element was the administration of the sacraments, especially of the mass. The sacraments were seven: baptism, confirmation, penance, the communion or mass, marriage, ordination and extreme unction. These were thought to be in themselves means of salvation. They were not merely symbols teaching religious truths, or ordinances giving help to those who had Christian faith; the mere acts had a magical saving power. They did their saving work independently of the spiritual condition, the faith or lack of faith, of those who received them. To receive baptism was to be regenerated; to partake of the communion was to receive the life of Christ. But the sacraments were means of salvation only when given by a duly ordained priest of the church.

The
sacramental
system

The mass

The central feature of worship was the greatest of the sacraments, the mass. This was celebrated, in the case of high mass, with much splendor. By imposing ceremonies, striking vestments, and solemn music, seen and heard in great, beautiful churches, a powerful impression was made on the spirit through the senses. In the thirteenth century, after it had long been believed that the bread and wine of the sacrament were miraculously changed into the actual flesh and blood of Christ, the church formally adopted this belief as one of its doctrines. This is the doctrine of transubstantiation. So the sacrament was an actual repetition of the sacrifice of Calvary. Every time it was celebrated, Christ's body was broken and his blood was shed for the sins of men. To receive the sacrament was to share in the benefits of this sacrifice, and to take into one's body the flesh and blood of Christ, bringing eternal life.¹

Preaching

Because the sacraments were so highly regarded, preaching was thought of much less importance. Little of it was done by parish priests, and in fact most of them were too ignorant to preach. When the Franciscan and Dominican friars came, they devoted themselves largely to this neglected work of the priesthood.

Worship was conducted strictly according to the church's prescribed orders and forms of words. The ritual everywhere was in Latin, and there-

¹ To the laity the bread only was given, for fear of spilling the wine. It was held that since the blood was contained in the flesh, the bread alone was sufficient.

fore very few of the people understood what they heard in church.

In earlier chapters we saw elements of pagan **Saint worship** superstition taking large place in Christian worship. These remained and even increased during all of the Middle Ages. Saint worship, in all the forms described in Chapter VI,¹ made a large part of popular religion. Patron saints without number were constantly invoked for special mercies. Adoration of relics and belief in their miraculous powers flourished, encouraged by the church. Countless stories about the wonders wrought by them were unquestioningly received; for example, a merchant of Gröningen stole the arm of John the Baptist from its place and kept it in his house, and when a great fire destroyed the town only this house escaped. Pilgrimages to saints' shrines were a conspicuous feature of medieval life. Thousands went on them, to work out penances, to earn indulgences, or to get healing of sickness. At the famous shrines, such as that of Thomas Becket at Canterbury, great wealth piled up through the offerings of the pilgrims, which was spent in costly decorations of precious metals and jewels.

The worship of the Virgin made another large part of popular religion. In the teaching of the church there was never any tendency to ascribe divinity to the mother of our Lord; but she received a great share of the worship of the people. They thought of her, the woman and the mother, **Mariolatry**

¹ See p. 90.

as being compassionate and gracious. Such elements of character were not much to be found in God and the Son of God, as the church presented them. God was put before the people chiefly as creator and ruler; Jesus chiefly as judge. So they felt that they were surest of obtaining sympathy and help when their prayers were addressed to the Virgin. They sought her intercession for their needs, made her the protectress of many of their undertakings, built costly shrines and churches in her honor, and magnified her festivals.

**Church
buildings**

In any account of medieval religion something must be said about the great church buildings of the period. The cathedrals and abbey churches which modern travelers go far to see, and many of the parish churches as well, form a most significant expression of medieval religious feeling. By their number and size and beauty and costliness they show how large a part in life was played by religion, and the church representing it. The chief buildings of the Middle Ages were not for governmental or business, but religious purposes. The churches are important, also, as being the greatest works of medieval art. Since architecture was the principal art of the Middle Ages, and since religion was so dominant a concern of men, naturally their artistic powers were largely employed in building churches.

The religious revival of the eleventh century showed itself in much church-building. "The earth awoke from its slumbers and put on a white

robe of churches.” During the next four centuries this continued, until throughout western Europe there were hundreds of the grandest buildings ever erected for religious purposes. In this work kings, nobles, cities, bishops, monks and the people all shared. The people often showed the greatest generosity and devotion. In the eleventh century and much of the twelfth the prevailing style of architecture was the Norman, marked by the round arch, of which Durham Cathedral is a famous example. In the latter part of the twelfth century there came in the Gothic style, the mark of which is the pointed arch. This very soon became universal in western Europe, and it is the characteristic medieval style. No other form of architecture is so congenial to worship. It is impossible to enter a great Gothic church without being moved to reverence and serious thought, and without feeling that it is a monument of a time when religion had tremendous power over men.

7. The Church's Place in Religion

From what has been said in this chapter, it must now be clear that in the religion of the people of the Middle Ages the church was all important. Men were taught, and believed, that the church stood between God and them as a mediator. It brought to men the saving grace of God in its sacraments. It spoke to them the commands of God through its discipline. It gave them true knowledge concerning God in its teachings. Through its machinery of intercessors it pre-

The church a
mediator
between God
and men

sented to God men's needs. All who fulfilled its requirements it undertook to set right with God and to lead to salvation. By the ministries of the church God and men were brought together. Only thus did God's gift of eternal life come to men.

**Powers of the
priesthood**

The church held this place by virtue of the divinely given authority which was believed to belong to its priesthood. When Protestants speak of the Church, they mean the community of Christian people. To them laymen are members of the Church just as much as clergymen are. Clergymen have a special kind of service to give in the Church, but no special spiritual privileges or powers. All members of the Church, clergy and laity alike, stand before God on exactly the same footing. But when medieval men spoke of the Church, they meant primarily the priesthood. The priests had mysterious and awful powers, received from Christ through ordination, by which they could mediate between God and men. God's spiritual gifts came to men and men drew near to God through the priests, and only through them. In their hands were the powers of life and death, of heaven and hell. To be out of communion with them was to be separated from God and doomed to everlasting woe.

For the people of western Europe in the Middle Ages, Christianity was altogether bound up with the church, that is with the great organization ruled over by the Pope. Only a comparatively few dissenters¹ thought of such a thing as

¹ See Chapter X.

being a Christian apart from this church. For the mass of men, to be a Christian was to obey the Roman Church.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Describe the property and income of the church.
2. How was this wealth used?
3. What were the powers of the Pope?
4. Describe the office of bishop.
5. Describe the medieval parish priest.
6. What was the relation of the monks and the Pope?
7. What services did the monks render in this period?
8. What was the moral condition of the monasteries?
9. Explain these features of the church's discipline:
 - a. Penance.
 - b. Indulgences.
 - c. Excommunication.
10. Describe the law and courts of the church.
11. What was the Inquisition?
12. What was the general medieval feeling regarding heresy?
13. Describe the worship of the medieval church.
14. What were the seven sacraments? What idea was held regarding their power?
15. What is the doctrine of transubstantiation? What was the mass believed to be?
16. Describe saint worship in this period.
17. What was the reason for the worship of the Virgin?
18. What place did the church hold in the religion of the people? What gave it this place?

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CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH AT THE HEIGHT OF THE MIDDLE AGES (CONTINUED)

(A. D. 1073-1294)

I. THE WESTERN CHURCH (Continued)

B. THE CHURCH RULING THE WESTERN WORLD (Continued)

8. Christian Life under the Church's Rule

We now want to see what sort of character and conduct were produced by the great religious system at which we have been looking. Here two different things are to be noted. One is the Christianity of some wonderful men and women whom the whole Christian Church to-day honors. Another is the Christianity of the common people.

As examples of medieval Christianity at its best let us take Bernard of Clairvaux, Dominic, and Francis of Assisi. Bernard (1090-1153) came of a noble family of Burgundy. His father was one of the men in whom the spirit of chivalry found its best expression—a brave man and a friend of the poor and helpless—and his mother was a saintly character. In their home, an abode of faith and goodness, all their children grew up devoted to God. Bernard was too weak in body for a knight's life, and even in his family he was of unusual religious earnestness. It was natural, in his time, that he should become a monk. This

Christianity
of religious
leaders;
(1) Bernard

he did when he was twenty-two. Even so early he showed some of the qualities that were to make his life memorable. He took with him into the monastery all his brothers and thirty other men; for the power of his nature and of his enthusiasm for the monk's life was irresistible. He proved the genuineness of his consecration by entering, not one of the monasteries of comfortable life, but that of Citeaux, where the rule was the most strict and the monks endured the severest self-denials—"only one meal a day, never meat or fish or eggs, short spells of sleep, midnight devotions, and hard toil in the fields." But even this way of life did not require self-sacrifice enough for Bernard's enthusiasm. He put on himself further austerities which permanently impaired his health.

**Bernard
founding
Clairvaux**

Two years later he was sent out at the head of a little colony of monks to found another monastery. In a desolate, forbidding valley of eastern France they built a sort of rude barn, out of which was to grow the famous abbey of Clairvaux. Attracted by Bernard's presence, many men came to be monks of Clairvaux, of whom not a few were of high station. His abbey prospered greatly in every way. Many who did not become monks resorted to Clairvaux for short stays, for the sake of being near Bernard. Over his monks and all those with whom he came in contact he exercised a marvelous influence, through personal relations and through his daily preaching in the abbey church. The secret of it can be briefly told by saying that he had a great love for

**His influence
over his monks**

men, and a great love for God. He had "intense sympathy with human need," as we can read in his letters, many of which have been preserved. And he had ardent devotion to God and to Christ in whom he saw the love of God. This spirit we can feel in some of his hymns which we sing, "O sacred head, now wounded" and "Jesus, the very thought of thee."

Bernard's influence went out far beyond Clairvaux. His great services to monasticism we saw in our last chapter. But his power was not confined by monastery walls. It is literally true that in the first half of the twelfth century this semi-invalid monk, never holding any office but that of abbot of Clairvaux, without wealth or armed force, was the most influential man of Europe. This was due solely to the saintliness and the force of his character. His advice was asked by all kinds of people, the highest and the humblest, about all kinds of matters, great and small; and his counsel almost always prevailed. In bold, outspoken letters he reproved the Popes and the king of France for neglect of the duties of their stations. When Europe was in confusion because of a dispute as to which of two men was rightful Pope, his decision was sought by the king and prelates of France, and was accepted everywhere. When Pope Eugenius IV proclaimed the second Crusade, he threw upon Bernard the task of rousing men to undertake it. In France and in Germany his preaching stirred unbounded enthusiasm for the holy war. The emperor had decided to stay

His influence
in Europe

at home, but when he heard Bernard preach he, too, took the cross. So he was the spiritual ruler of Christendom; and yet all his life he remained humble and unselfish.

(2) **Dominic** Not long after Bernard's death was born the great Spaniard who is called Dominic (1170-1221). He had a long university training, and then became a priest; but his real life work was rather slow in coming to him. When he was past thirty he traveled through southeastern France, and there saw the effect of the so-called Albigensian heresy,¹ a medley of truth and error, which had caused a widespread desertion of the church. He saw also the beginning of the terrible war by which the Popes stamped out the heresy. It all gave to him the idea that what the times needed was the preaching of Christian truth. Thus, he saw, heresy ought to be put down. At length he conceived the plan of forming a company of trained preachers, who should travel about and teach the people. When he was forty-five he got from Innocent III approval of his plan, and at once began to form his order. His project met with enthusiastic response from the young men of his time, showing that he had seen what the age needed.

His plan for
his order

Growth of
the order

The order grew by leaps and bounds. Within four years from the beginning of active work, about twenty houses of the Dominican friars² were established in several European countries, and the work of the friars spread widely. Burning

¹ See pp. 119, 132.

² "Friar" is derived from the Latin *frater*, brother.

with zeal, Dominic traveled extensively, preaching and getting recruits. Since his plan called for trained preachers, he tried particularly to interest university students, and he won many for his order. He desired to go as a missionary to the heathen Tartars of southern Russia. But worn out by excessive toil, he died only four years after he sent out the first of his friars, leaving his order numerous, widespread and solidly organized. Dominic had not the wonderful magnetism of his contemporary, Francis of Assisi; but by his wisdom, force, enthusiasm and genius for organization he created one of the great religious powers of the Middle Ages.

Of the religious leaders of the Middle Ages, Francis of Assisi is to-day the most honored and loved by the whole Christian Church. Christians of all names feel themselves inspired by the life of this man who so faithfully followed Jesus. Francis (1182-1226) was the son of a well-to-do merchant of Assisi, in central Italy. In the midst of a careless and dissipated youth a severe illness sobered him and turned his thoughts to God. His religious awakening at once showed itself in loving service of his fellow men. Extravagant before for his own pleasure, he now was extravagantly generous in his gifts to the poor. He devoted himself especially to the most neglected and miserable people of the Middle Ages, the lepers, giving them personal care and friendship. He also restored some ruined chapels, seeking thus to express his desire to serve God. He had not

(3) Francis of
Assisi

yet found the work that God had for him. His father, angered by his prodigal gifts, tried to restrain him as a madman. Therefore Francis renounced his claim to his father's property, and went out into the world a poor man.

His call to
service

Soon after, at mass in a chapel near Assisi he heard the priest read that portion of the tenth chapter of Matthew which describes Jesus' sending forth his disciples to preach. This came to him as a direct call of Jesus, and he straightway obeyed. Though a layman, he went into the town and preached. Then, and all his life, he preached with great effect, teaching the simplest, most practical Christianity with a power given by his devotion to Jesus and his own winning personality.

Formation of
the
brotherhood

Very soon two men of Assisi became his companions. This led him to think of a brotherhood of men who should live as he was living, in service to their fellow men in the name of Jesus, and in poverty. A few other disciples came, and the brotherhood was formed. In this first year (1209 or 1210) Francis and his followers carried on a preaching mission in the country regions of Umbria. The company kept increasing, most of its members being young men from Assisi and its neighborhood. Unlike the Dominicans, these early Franciscans were largely without education. After this first service of the brotherhood, Francis went to Rome with some of his followers, and obtained from Innocent III a partial approval of his purpose for their life.

The use of the chapel where Francis had heard

his call to service was given to him, and he made it the headquarters of the brotherhood. Rude shelters were built around it for the brothers. But they were seldom there, for their time was spent in serving the people in accordance with the commands and example of Jesus. They preached in the fields when the workers were resting, and in the market places of towns, and wherever they could get opportunity. They ministered to need of all kinds as they could, especially to lepers. Money to give they had none, for poverty was an essential part of their life, but they gave personal service and care. Their mission was not, like that of the Dominicans, one of preaching only, but one of general ministry to all the needs of men, of which the preaching of the gospel formed a part. They supported themselves by working when they could. When this failed they resorted to begging. Hence both they and the Dominicans, who early adopted the Franciscan policy of poverty, were sometimes called the Mendicant (begging) Orders.

A striking characteristic of these first Franciscans was their joyfulness, which was inspired in them by Francis. To him and to those of his followers who received his spirit, a life of service to men and of poverty for Jesus' sake was no burden or sacrifice, but a great happiness. The early Franciscan movement was permeated by the spirit of Francis—his devotion and obedience to Jesus, his love for men, his unworldliness, his joy. Never has there been an endeavor to follow Jesus that showed more faith in him and more readiness to

The work of
the Franciscans

do his bidding than that made by Francis and these first Franciscans.

**Growth of the
Franciscans;
missions**

The brotherhood grew very rapidly, in Italy and beyond. When the second annual general chapter was held, in 1217, there were Franciscan friars in Germany, Hungary and Spain, and missions to non-Christian lands had been begun. To Cardinal Ugolini, finding fault with him for sending his brethren to distant and dangerous places, Francis replied: "Do you think that God has raised up the brothers for the sake of this country alone? Verily, I say unto you, God has raised them up for the awakening and salvation of all men." In 1218 he went himself to Palestine, thinking, in the simplicity of his faith, to convert the Moslems by preaching. He went boldly into the Moslem army at Damietta, in Egypt, and preached, but with no success. Among the armies of the crusaders, however, he won a number of recruits.

**Last years of
Francis**

Returning to Italy after two years, Francis found that those whom he had left in charge of the brotherhood had somewhat departed from his ideals. He intended not only that the individual brothers should have no property of their own, but also that the brotherhood should have none. Poverty seemed to him to mean liberty from worldly cares interfering with Christian discipleship. But in his absence his rule was modified, so that the brotherhood could hold property. He was deeply troubled by this, and by some other changes which he found. It is possible that he became convinced that his ideal of poverty was

impracticable for a body of men carrying on work in many countries, as the brotherhood now was. Perhaps he saw also that he was incapable of managing a great, widespread organization. Certainly his gifts were not those of administration. At any rate, he asked the Pope to take the brotherhood under his protection, which resulted in its being made an order, on the same plane as the monastic orders, and he resigned his place as its head. During his few remaining years he felt much sorrow over tendencies in the order away from his desires for it. But before his death his old joyfulness returned and uttered itself in the famous "Canticle of the Sun."

In spite of some variations from the ideals of Francis, the Franciscans for many years kept much of his spirit. Wherever there were neglected and wretched people, the Franciscans set up their houses and labored. The Dominicans were worthy rivals to them in single-minded devotion to their work. The friars of both orders preached widely and served their fellow men in many other ways. Both orders carried their missions to the limits of the known world, with heroic fidelity. A noble Franciscan, John de Monte Corvino, reached Peking before the end of the thirteenth century, and worked there eleven years alone, until another joined him. He gained large results in a service which lasted thirty-six years. Many of the leaders of the medieval church came from these two orders, in particular almost all of its greatest theologians.

Later work of
Dominicans
and
Franciscans

Difference
between
religious
leaders and
the people

There is a strange distance between what the medieval church produced in a comparatively few great characters, such as Bernard, Dominic, Francis, Anselm, Louis IX of France, and Catherine of Siena, and the religious life of the great mass under its rule. The distance is certainly far greater than that between the highest characters and the great mass in modern European and American Protestantism.

Popular
Christianity
a religion of
fear

The Christianity of almost all people in the Middle Ages was essentially a religion of fear. The church held its children in control by keeping alive in them dread of its power over life here and hereafter. The God of whom it taught was a God of judgment, whose anger against sin could be averted only by conformity to the commands of the church to which he had given authority. What made most people take part in religious observances and obey the moral precepts of religion was not love and trust toward God, but terror at the thought of the consequences of doing otherwise.

and of
superstition

Popular Christianity also consisted largely of superstitious beliefs and practices. There was much of this nature in the worship of the church and in its system of sacramental magic. The common people, because of ignorance and surviving heathen habits of mind, took up with the superstitious part of the form of Christianity which was put before them, rather than with its more spiritual part. It was mostly in the former that they found their religion. Much can be learned

about the religion of the people in the Middle Ages from the *Dialogus Miraculorum*, a book written by Cæsar of Heisterbach in Germany while Francis was preaching in Italy. It is a collection of wonderful stories, which the author and the people among whom he lived accepted as absolutely true. The book shows that in popular belief there was much that was not above the level of gross heathenism. For example, a hawk seized a parrot and flew away with it. But the parrot cried out, "Holy Thomas of Canterbury, save me"; whereupon the hawk fell dead to the ground. Again, when a certain woman's bees became diseased, she put into the hive a wafer of the bread of the communion. The bees, perceiving the body of Christ, built round it a little chapel, with tower, door, windows and altar.¹

Thus the religion of the mass of the people was a much debased Christianity. In these times the common people were grossly ignorant and very poor. They lived in filth and general wretchedness rarely seen nowadays. Since they had to uplift them only this corrupt kind of religion, it is no wonder that there was great and widespread wickedness. Evil and misery were frightfully prevalent among the people, especially in the great towns.

Yet in some places, particularly in Germany, there was to be found true evangelical piety. This

¹ See also the story about the arm of John the Baptist, on p. 135. These stories are taken from Workman: "The Church of the West in the Middle Ages," Vol. II, pp. 187, 188.

Evangelical
religion
among the
people

was taught through the associations of family life rather than through the agencies of the church. We have evidence of its existence in hymns used in the homes, and in some accounts of medieval home life. The Lutheran Friedrich Mecum said of his own childhood, before the Reformation: "My dear father had taught me in my childhood the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, and constrained me to pray always. For, said he, 'Everything comes to us from God alone, and that *gratis*, free of cost, and he will lead us and rule us, if we only diligently pray to him.' " After quoting this, the historian Lindsay adds, "We can trace this simple evangelical family religion away back through the Middle Ages."¹

9. *The Service of the Medieval Church to the World*

Protestants are in danger of failing to appreciate the good in the medieval church and the good that it did. This church was a part, and the largest part, of the Church of Christ. Though mixed with much error, it kept through centuries the faith of Christ. The reformers tore away many of the errors, and gave to Europe the faith in a far purer form. But the faith was there to be disencumbered because it had been handed down from generation to generation through the medieval church. This church, as we have seen, produced some men and women who stood near

The church
preserved
Christian faith

¹ Lindsay: "History of the Reformation," Vol. I, p. 124.

to Christ; a tree wholly corrupt could not bring forth such fruit.

Moreover, in order to judge aright this great organization, we must look at it in the light of the world in which it was placed. When it was forming, Europe was in the chaos caused by the migrations of the peoples. The Roman Empire, which had held the world together, was gone. There was danger that the population of Europe would break up into warring barbarian tribes. This would have meant the drowning of Christianity and civilization under a deluge of heathenism and savagery. The situation demanded a powerful organization which should bind men into one and hold them in some degree of control. This need the church met. Later, when the power of the great nobles developed, another danger appeared. This was that Europe would be separated into many domains ruled by nobles, great and small, always fighting with one another. Against this tendency toward division and hostility, the one church including all men was a great power. It kept in the life of western Europe a measure of unity, which gave opportunity for Christianity and civilization to live and grow.

**It kept Europe
in unity**

The medieval church took hold of the barbarians who flooded Europe, instructed them in Christian truth, and trained them in Christian and civilized living. No doubt this work was very imperfectly done. But it was actually done, and done well enough to prove permanent. We cannot see in those times any means by which the work could

**It Christianized
and civilized
the barbarians**

It uplifted
morals

have been done better. With all its faults, the church achieved certain precious advances in general morals, and conferred inestimable benefits. It abolished slavery. It greatly elevated the position of women. It defended the family. It mitigated the horrors of war. Its charities relieved much need and gave men a living lesson in the spirit of Jesus. For centuries the church provided all the education that Europe had. Most of the scholars and thinkers of the Middle Ages belonged to its clergy. To the church we owe directly many of the noblest works of medieval art.

Its services
to culture

In spite of errors and corruptions and cruelties the medieval church was in its time a providential instrument, necessary for the preservation and extension of Christianity and Christian civilization. When its time came to an end, the church was in great measure broken up, and other instruments of God arose to do the work of his kingdom.

II. THE EASTERN CHURCH

Just before the beginning of this period (1054) came the final break between the East and the West. The Eastern or Greek Church then became an entirely separate organization. Its chief ruler was the patriarch of Constantinople, but he never had such power as the Pope had in the West.

Worship

In worship and popular religion the Greek Church had interesting likenesses to and differences from the Western Church.

The sacraments

The seven sacraments were accepted in it. Baptism was admin-

istered by immersion in infancy. Penance was required, but it never was so systematic as in the West, nor were indulgences given. The priests as they pronounced absolution told penitents that they could not forgive, but only God. Nevertheless the idea of the church's mediation between God and man prevailed, as in the West.

The central feature of worship was the communion, as the mass was in the West. The communion service was an even more elaborate ceremony than Roman high mass. It contained many symbolic actions. Candles were lighted and put out; doors were opened and closed; the clergy walked in procession, bent the knee, prostrated themselves, kissed the altar and the book of the gospel, crossed themselves, changed their vestments of varied colors, embroidered and jeweled. The aim of all was to produce awe and faith by an appeal to the eye.

The
communion
service

There was not much preaching, as in the West. But Bible-reading was encouraged much more than there. The Bible was translated into the speech of several of the peoples of the church. Generally the ritual was in the language of the people. Yet the worship of images of the saints and the adoration of relics were carried even farther than in the West, and popular religion was even more superstitious. This was true of the Greeks, and still more of the Russians.¹

Superstitions

The Greek Church allowed its priests to marry, before ordination, and most of its clergy were mar-

¹ See p. 74.

ried. Bishops, however, had to be unmarried, so that they were usually chosen from among the monks. Monasteries were many and crowded, but the monks were not such valuable missionaries of Christianity and civilization as in the West.

Missions

The Moslem rule in western Asia made it impossible for the Greek Church to spread Christianity there. Some missionary work was done in the heathen parts of Russia in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In the thirteenth the terrible disaster of the Mongol occupation of Russia stopped the spread of Christianity there, too.

Lack of progress

Thus the Eastern Church had great hindrances to service in outward circumstances. But its greatest hindrance was its own lack of the spirit of progress. Its ruling desire was to remain what it had been, to avoid change. Since the eighth century it has changed very little in doctrine and worship. It has changed in government only because of political events, and then not much.

Nestorian Church

A word should be said here about the Nestorian Church. It continued in this period its widespread missions, and grew greatly. In the thirteenth century its patriarch had under him seventy bishoprics, including multitudes of Christians from Edessa in Syria to Peking, and from Siberia to southern India. But from this time until the fifteenth century the Mongol invasions brought on the Nestorians fearful losses, from which they have never recovered. Their church still exists in Persia and Syria, in pitiful weakness and corruption.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Describe the character and work of Bernard of Clairvaux.
2. Describe the work of Dominic.
3. Describe the religious experience of Francis of Assisi.
4. Tell how Francis formed his brotherhood, and describe its ministry.
5. Describe the later years of Francis.
6. Describe the growth of the Franciscans and Dominicans, and their work after the deaths of their founders.
7. What was the character of the Christianity of the common people in the Middle Ages?
8. Explain these services given by the medieval church:
 - a. The preservation of the Christian faith.
 - b. Keeping Europe in unity.
 - c. Christianizing and civilizing the barbarians.
 - d. Uplifting general morals.
 - e. Advancing intellectual life.
9. Describe worship in the Eastern Church.
10. What were the differences between the Eastern and Western churches as to
 - a. Bible-reading.
 - b. The use of the language of the people.
 - c. The marriage of the clergy.
 - d. The character of the religion of the people?
11. How does the Eastern Church show its conservatism?

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